



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

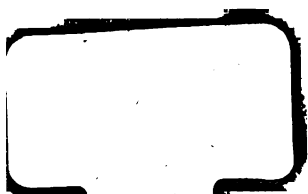
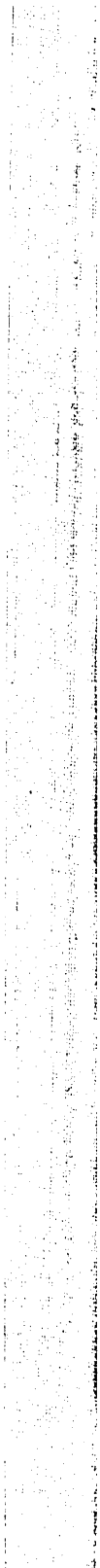
About Google Book Search

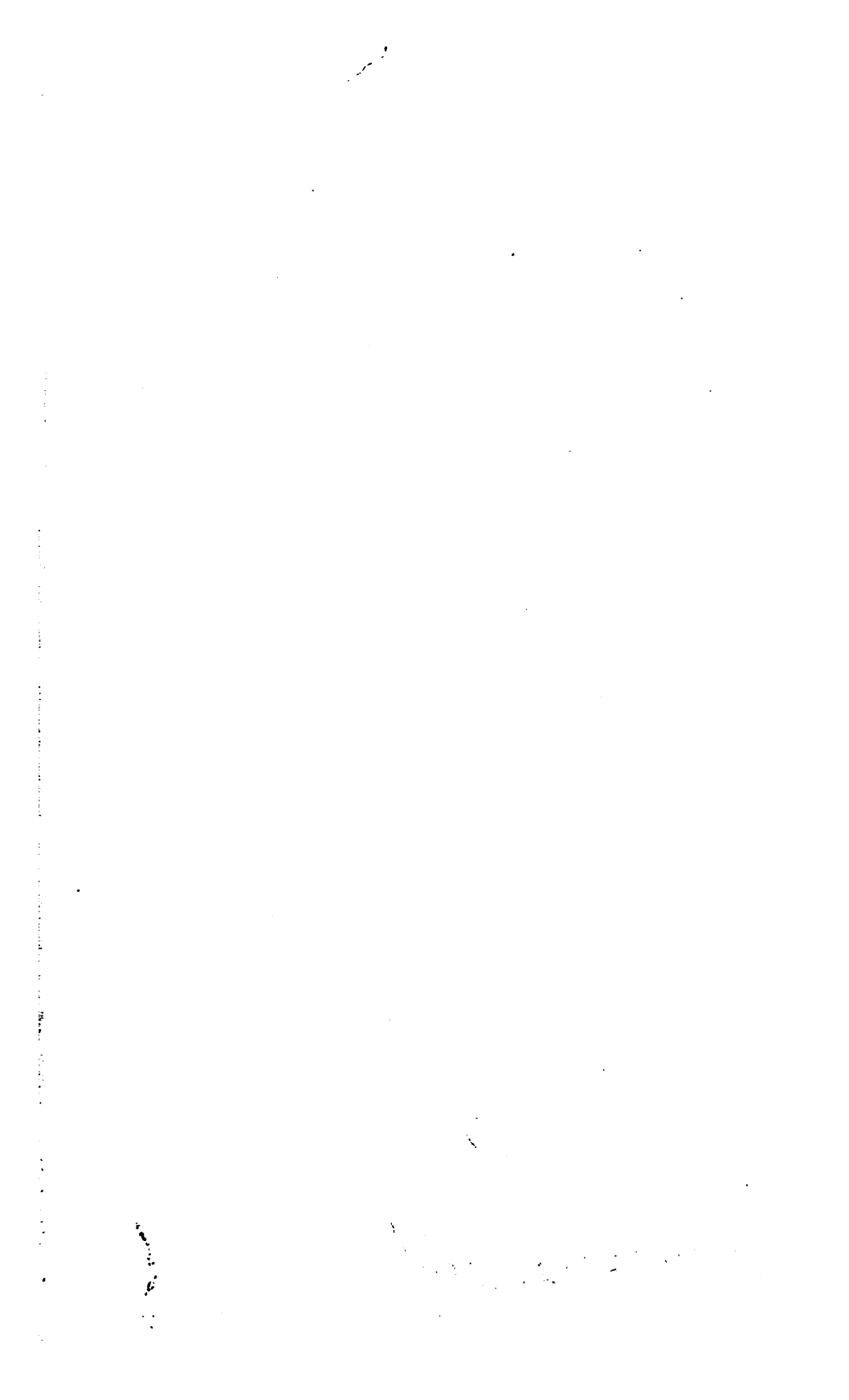
Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

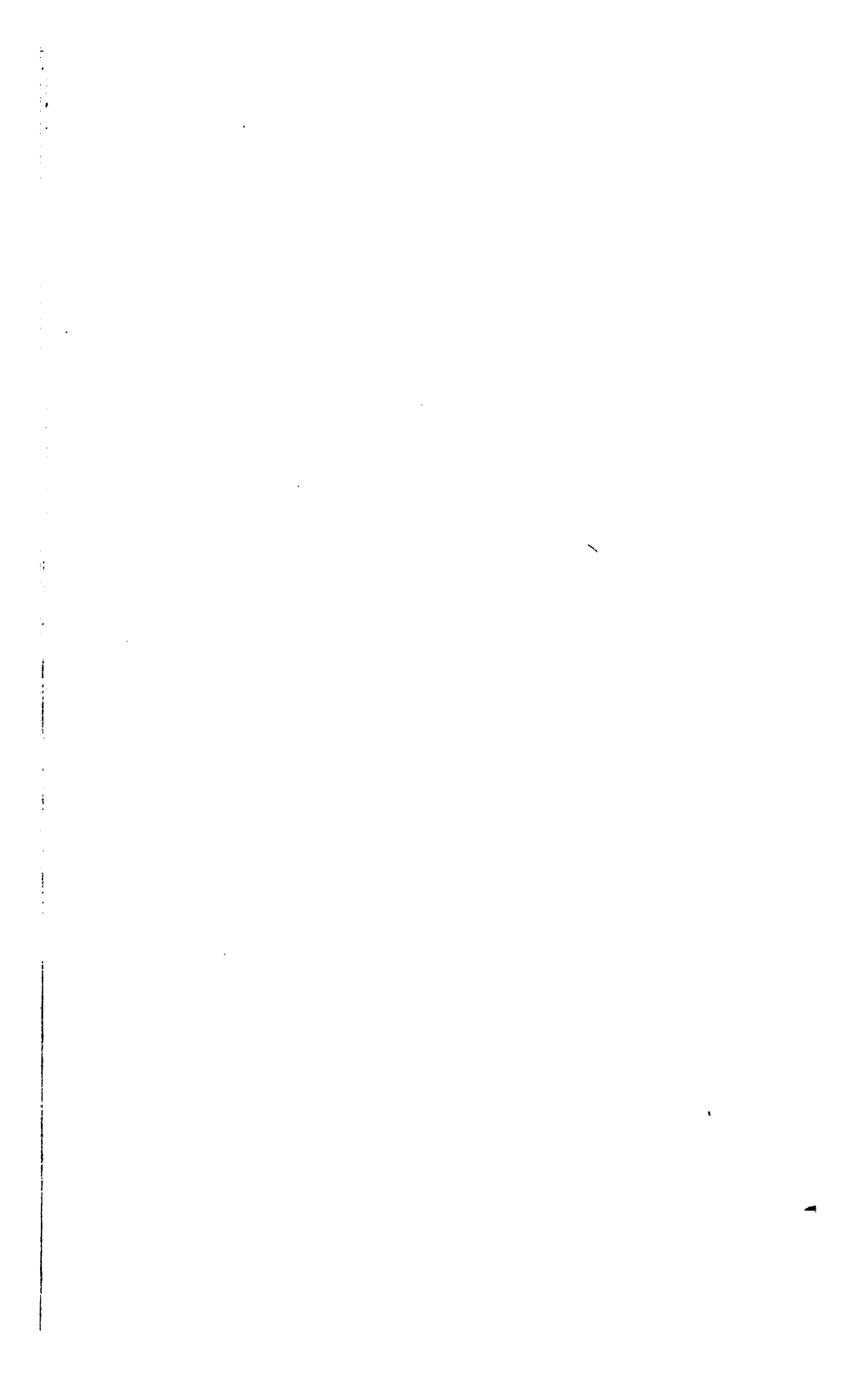
NYPL RESEARCH LIBRARIES

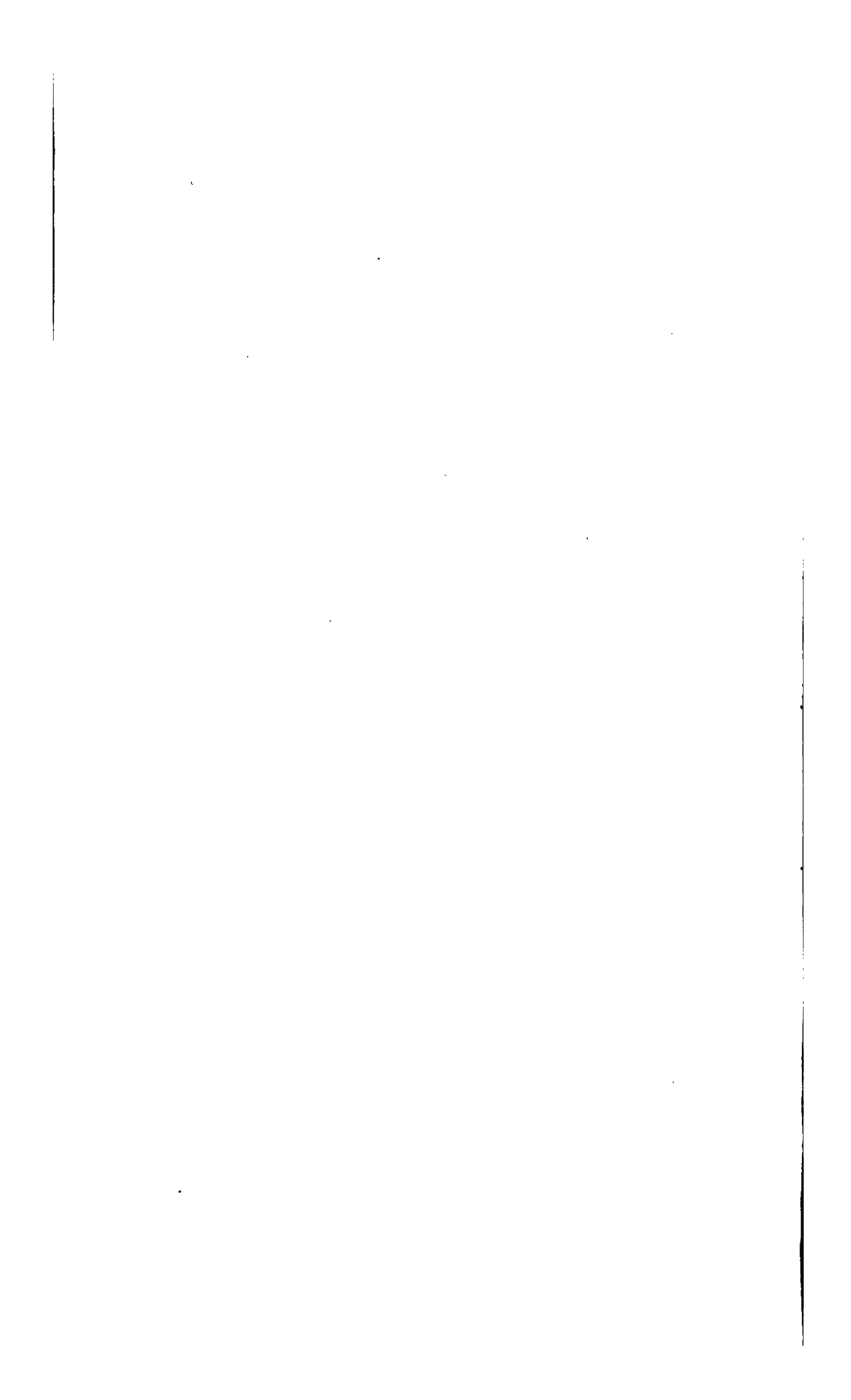


3 3433 06932761 1







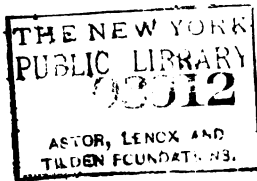


HISTORY
OF THE
IRISH REBELLION
OF 1798.

NEW YORK
PUBLIC
LIBRARY

Y. H. 2. 1. 1. 1.

C. 5



STEAM PRESS OF
CHAPMAN AND ELCOATE,
PETERBOROUGH-COURT AND SHOE-LANE,
FLEET-STREET.

XROY VEB
OLIEP
WAGEL

HISTORY
OF THE
IRISH REBELLION
OF 1798.

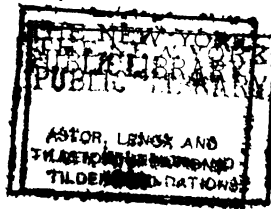
BY PHILIP HARWOOD.

"There was ambition, there was sedition, there was violence mixing in the public cause, but no man will persuade me that it was not the cause of Liberty on the one side, and Tyranny on the other."

CHATHAM.

London:
CHAPMAN AND ELCOATE,
SHOE-LANE, FLEET-STREET.

1844.



CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION—SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CONDITION OF THE IRISH
PEOPLE DURING THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY—THE PENAL
CODE—THE LANDLORDS—THE WHITEBOYS 1

CHAPTER II.

INTRODUCTION CONTINUED—IRISH PARLIAMENT AND PARLIA-
MENTARY POLITICS OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY—THE PRO-
TESTANT OPPOSITION—WOOD'S HALFPENCE—DOCTOR LUCAS—
THE UNDERTAKERS—TOWNSHEND'S GOLDEN DROPS—THE
AMERICAN WAR—MR. RICHARD HERON 12

CHAPTER III.

THE VOLUNTEERS OF 1782—"NOW IS OUR TIME"—MISERABLE
STATE OF HIS MAJESTY'S TREASURY—DRAGON'S TEETH SPRUNG
UP ARMED MEN—"FREE TRADE, OR ELSE"—SOMETHING
MUST BE DONE—A GREAT ORIGINAL TRANSACTION—SOME-
THING IS DONE—LAWYERS' DOUBTS. 24

CHAPTER IV.

THE LEGISLATIVE INDEPENDENCE—LAWYERS' DOUBTS CONTI-
NUED—REPEAL AND RENUNCIATION—REFORM AGITATION—
NATIONAL CONVENTION OF 1783—COMMERCIAL PROPOSITIONS
—THE CREEPING, INCIPIENT UNION—THE REGENCY QUESTION
—THE DISAPPOINTMENT 37

CHAPTER V.

RENEWED POPULAR EFFORTS—INFLUENCE OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION ON IRELAND—BELFAST POLITICS—THEOBALD WOLFE TONE—FIRST SOCIETY OF UNITED IRISHMEN—THE MISTAKE OF 1783 CORRECTED—THE NEW CATHOLIC DEMOCRACY—THE CATHOLIC QUESTION IN 1792—THE GRAND JURIES—THE BACK-LANE PARLIAMENT 51

CHAPTER VI.

PROGRESS OF THE UNITED IRISH AGITATION—JAMES NAPPER TANDY AND THE HOUSE OF COMMONS—PEEP-OF-DAY BOYS AND DEFENDERS—THEOBALD WOLFE TONE, HEAD-PACIFICATOR—THE FOURTEENTH OF JULY, 1792, AT BELFAST—THE BACK-LANE PARLIAMENT AGAIN—IRISH PAPISTS AT ST. JAMES'S 62

CHAPTER VII.

SESSION OF 1793—IRISH PAPISTS AT DUBLIN CASTLE—NEGOCIATION, CONCESSION, AND COERCION—THE SECRET COMMITTEE—THE LAST OF THE VOLUNTEERS—GUNPOWDER AND CONVENTION BILLS—ULTERIOR VIEWS 74

CHAPTER VIII.

IRELAND IN 1793 AND 1794—THE DEFENDERS AGAIN—THE FIRST OF THE STATE TRIALS—ARCHIBALD HAMILTON ROWAN—JACKSON AND COCKAYNE—END OF THE FIRST SOCIETY OF UNITED IRISHMEN 85

CHAPTER IX.

A GLEAM OF SUNSHINE—EARL FITZWILLIAM AND CONCILIATION—GENEROUS CREDULITY OF THE IRISH PEOPLE—DOUBTS AND FEARS—THE RECALL 95

CHAPTER X.

IRELAND IN 1795 AND 1796—GATHERING OF THE STORM— NEW ORGANISATION OF UNITED IRISHMEN—PEEP-OF-DAY BOYS AGAIN—WILLIAM THRESHAM AND JOHN THRUSTOUT— BATTLE OF THE DIAMOND—FIRST ORANGE LODGE—INDEMNITY AND INSURRECTION ACTS—DOMICILIARY VISITS AND ARRESTS —THE REBEL ARMY GETTING READY	99
---	----

CHAPTER XI.

THEOBALD WOLFE TONE IN FRANCE—THE BANTRY BAY EXPE- DITION	110
--	-----

CHAPTER XII.

IRELAND IN 1797—THE LAST OF CONCILIATION AND REFORM— SECESSION OF THE WHIG OPPOSITION—PROGRESS OF THE UNITED IRISHMEN—GENERAL LAKE'S PROCLAMATION—MAR- TIAL LAW IN ULSTER—SECRET COMMITTEE—INFORMER NEWELL—THE DISARMING OF ULSTER—"THE SPORT OF MAN- HUNTING"—NECESSARY ACTS OF COERCION—THE UNITED IRISHMEN AT THE CLOSE OF 1797—ALLIANCE WITH THE DEFENDERS—"REMEMBER ORR"	121
--	-----

CHAPTER XIII.

THE YEAR 1798—PREPARING FOR THE WAR—MORE DISAPPOINT- MENTS FROM FRANCE—TRIAL OF FINNEY—O'BRIEN AND THE BATTALION OF TESTIMONY—MILITARY COMMITTEE—AN ARMY FORMIDABLE TO EVERY ONE BUT THE ENEMY—THOMAS REY- NOLDS—ARRESTS OF THE TWELFTH OF MARCH—THE NEW DIRECTORY—PROCLAMATION OF THE THIRTIETH OF MARCH— "WELL-TIMED MEASURES TO MAKE THE REBELLION EXPLODE" —PLAN OF THE CAMPAIGN—THE DAY FIXED	136
---	-----

CHAPTER XIV.

THE WAR	158
-------------------	-----

CHAPTER XV.

PRISONERS AND CONVICTS—THE BROTHERS SHEARES—AMNESTY COMPACT—FORT GEORGE	211
--	-----

CHAPTER XVI.

THE FRENCH COME AT LAST—KILLALA, CASTLEBAR, AND BAL- LINAMUCK—GENERAL TONE ON BOARD—LOUGH SWILLY—THE FIRST AND LAST OF THE UNITED IRISHMEN—CONCLUSION	227
---	-----

APPENDIX.

TRIAL OF HUGH WOLLAGHAN, FOR THE MURDER OF THOMAS DOGHERTY	241
SOME STATISTICS OF THE REBELLION	245
RELIGION PROFESSED BY THE LEADING MEMBERS OF THE UNITED IRISH SOCIETY, OR PERSONS SUSPECTED OF SO BEING	247

HISTORY

OF THE

IRISH REBELLION

OF 1798.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION—SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CONDITION OF THE IRISH PEOPLE DURING THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY—THE PENAL CODE—THE LANDLORDS—THE WHITEBOYS.

WE intend, in the following pages, to lay before our readers a clear and succinct account of that tremendous national convulsion, known as the GREAT IRISH REBELLION of 1798; of the causes which remotely or proximately prepared it, of the objects which its authors had in view, of the agencies by which it was conducted, and of the means by which it was suppressed.

Many considerations might be adduced, as fitted to suggest and recommend such a work as this, of which we now offer to the public the introductory chapter; but there is one, compared with which all the rest sink into triviality. It is a history full of stirring incident; diversified by strange fortunes, sudden and startling vicissitudes, picturesque situations, hair-breadth escapes, remarkable men, great virtues and great crimes, and the excitement of all the varied passions of which our nature is capable, collected into one focus, and absorbed in one central interest. Yet the same may be said of other histories; and, if mere excitement were what we wished to give the reader, fiction might, perhaps, answer the purpose better than any history. It is a history abounding in those lessons of political justice which constitute the moral of history, and the best part of its philosophy; it shows us oppression reacting in crime, and crime in weakness and misery—the seed of tyrannous injustice growing up into a harvest of rebellion, and the sins of the fathers descending on the sons and the sons' sons. Yet other histories show this likewise, and the trite and familiar moral needs not to be laboriously demonstrated anew. It is a history, too, which has long been waiting to be written, and of which the materials, scattered over a wide surface of literature, have not yet, so far as we know, been condensed into readable brevity and convenient cheapness for the mass of readers; yet there are many other such *desiderata* still un-

supplied, and we do not know that any mere abstract notion of the fitness of filling up a vacuum in popular literature would have directed our choice to this particular topic. We write the History of the Irish Rebellion—as we desire that it should be read—not for curiosity, but for *use*; to meet a present, practical, and most pressing want of the day and the hour. We write it, because we believe that the great multitude of reading Englishmen do not know the history of Ireland—do not know a hundredth part of the crimes that have been perpetrated against Ireland in their name and by their authority; and because we are sure it is high time they did know these things. Mr. O'Connell says, in his "Memoir on Ireland, Native and Saxon,"* "It has pleased the English people in general to forget all the facts in Irish history." Mr. O'Connell is mistaken. The English people in general are quite guiltless of forgetting that which they never knew. The English people in general are woefully ignorant of the facts of Irish history. The generality of educated Englishmen know more about the Punic and Peloponnesian wars than about the wars of Ireland, native and Saxon; are more at home in the siege of Troy than in the siege of Limerick; could give you a far better account of the expedition of Nicias to Syracuse than of the expedition of Hoche and Tone to Bantry Bay; and are infinitely better read in the laws of Solon and Lycurgus than in the Penal Code against the Irish Catholics. It is high time all this were changed. *It is not safe* for England to remain ignorant of Ireland, and of the facts of Irish history. The English people in general must inform themselves of the facts of Irish history, and of the state of things which has grown out of those facts, and of their own interests and duties relative to that state of things—or it will be worse for the English people in general. We must make ourselves acquainted with the wrongs which we have done, or caused and suffered to be done, against Ireland, that we may set ourselves with all diligence to undo them while there is time—if, indeed, the time be not already past. In order to do, or get done, that JUSTICE TO IRELAND which is every hour becoming a more and more pressing necessity for Great Britain, we must learn to understand Ireland; we must learn to put ourselves in the place of Irishmen, to enter into their feelings, to make their point of vision ours, and incorporate the facts of their history with our own most familiar knowledge. This is our purpose in writing the History of the Irish Rebellion. We cannot desire any surer guarantee for the dispassionate consideration, and the safe, wise and honest adjustment of all outstanding questions between Great Britain and Ireland, than that the English people in general should have a clear and comprehensive understanding of the rebellion of 1798, in all its causes, effects, circumstances and relations.

We are not going in these pages to write the politics of 1843, under the name of the history of 1798. If the politics of the day have given us a subject, they will not (consciously to ourselves) influence our mode of treating it. We shall not attempt to make out a case either for or against the Repeal of the Union. Neither on this nor on any other question of contemporaneous politics have we here any "case" to make. What we desire is, to accustom Englishmen to study, understand, and sympathise with Ireland; to get people to see—what it is so wonderful any people

should not see—that (next to the food-and-work question) the first question of the day—the question of questions—is the Irish question. Clear it is, that Irish politics are destined to become, more and more with every advancing month, the subject of discussion and legislation; and we believe nothing can better ensure the sobriety of the discussion, and the beneficence and wisdom of the legislation, than the putting the English people in general in possession of some of those facts in past Irish history, out of which the perplexities and trials of our present Irish politics have mainly arisen.

To write intelligibly the History of the Irish Rebellion of 1798, it will be necessary, first of all, to review at some length the condition of the Irish people, and the general course of Irish history, during the seventy or eighty years preceding that outbreak. Effects never come without causes, and are not to be understood without the knowledge of their causes. No people ever rebelled yet, without something to rebel for; and to detail the mere marchings and counter-marchings, the sieges and battles of a civil war, without a previous understanding of the social and moral state of things out of which civil war grew, would be to begin at the end—to commence with the conclusion. The Rebellion of 1798 did not begin with the year 1798; it had been getting ready generations before: it was no sudden whimsey of popular caprice or passion, but the last result of ages of oppression and misrule; it was the violent crisis of a chronic disease—it was the fifth act of a tragedy. To write or to read truly the history of the Irish Rebellion of 1798, we must go back to the previous state of Ireland, the condition of her people, the spirit of her laws, the constitution and character of her government, legislative and administrative, during the earlier part of the century whose closing years have written their annals in blood and fire; we must inform ourselves of the social and political condition of the Irish people during the eighteenth century, or we cannot understand the civil convulsion with which the century closed.

And yet—such is the monstrous anomalousness of everything in and about Irish history—we find, at the very outset, the need of a new vocabulary to express truly the social facts and relations which we have to do with; even the seemingly so simple and common-place combination of words in which we have phrased the subject of this preliminary chapter requires correction and qualification. “Social and political condition of the Irish people during the eighteenth century!”—Why, during the greater part of the eighteenth century there was, in strictness, no such thing as an *Irish people*. There were in Ireland, during the eighteenth century, two *PEOPLES*—a tyrant-people and a slave-people—existing in physical and local juxtaposition on the same superficies of soil, but without moral or social community; severed by a wide gulf of religious hatred, political exclusion, social enmity, and legal proscription. “Irish people,” during the eighteenth century, there was not. Of that which, for want of another name, we must still continue to call the people of Ireland, five-sixths stood, both in law and in fact, to the remaining one-sixth, in the relation at once of *slaves and enemies*—as slaves, despised; as enemies, hated—a degraded, excluded, proscribed, alien, villein caste. The combination was of fearful consequence. Had they been only slaves, they might have counted on such kindness as merciful and prudent owners exercise towards slaves; had they been only enemies, the laws of war would have left them a chance of fair

and honourable terms of peace; but the complication of servitude with enmity produced a result such as no other time or country than Ireland in the eighteenth century can match: they were the hated slaves and the scorned foes of an oligarchy, which occupied the seat, and wielded the powers of government, in the spirit of a garrison in an enemy's country. The law and constitution of Ireland in the eighteenth century formally ignored the existence of these five-sixths of the Irish people. In the year 1759 it was ruled in the Four Courts of Dublin, that "*the law did not presume a Papist to exist in the kingdom, nor could they breathe without the connivance of government.*"* And this atrocious legal fiction both the makers and administrators of the law did their best to realise as a fact. Five-sixths of the Irish people, during the greater part of that century, were, under the name of Papists, aliens in their own country. They were excluded from every privilege, every office, every emolument, every civil trust, every corporate right, every political franchise. They were excluded from the navy, from the army, from the magistracy, from the law. They were excluded from parliament, from juries, from elections. They could not buy land, they could not bear arms, they could not educate their children, they could not intermarry with Protestants, they could not so much as ride good horses. The law did not presume them to exist, nor could they "breathe without the connivance of government."

The diabolical character of this law, which presumed the non-existence of five-sixths of the people subject to it, cannot be adequately understood from these generalities. To do justice to the hateful thing, we must track it, step by step, through the various stages of its growth, as it was gradually matured by the inventive malice—the refined, cold-blooded, lawyer-like atrocity—of many successive parliaments, premising that it had its origin in a deliberate breach of faith. The whole thing together was a violation, laboriously prolonged and aggravated through three-quarters of a century, both of the letter and the spirit of a public treaty.

On the 3rd of October, 1691, the Irish army of James II., then in occupation of the city of Limerick, surrendered to the commander-in-chief of the English forces of King William, on the terms of a treaty duly signed, and afterwards enrolled in Chancery; which treaty guaranteed to the Catholics of the kingdom of Ireland the continuance of all their then existing civil, political and social rights (which included nearly every thing the law now gives them), with the express promise, in the first article, of "*such further security as might PRESERVE THEM FROM ANY DISTURBANCE UPON THE ACCOUNT OF THEIR SAID RELIGION.*"†

Now, how was this treaty performed? On the principle of *keeping no faith with heretics*.

On the 27th of August, 1695, King William summoned a parliament at Dublin; and in his royal speech, by the mouth of his Lord Deputy, he recommended them to "lay hold on the opportunity then put into their hands, of *making such a lasting settlement that it might never more be in the power of their enemies to put England to expense of blood and treasure.*"‡

* Flawden's History of Ireland, vol. ii., p. 126.

† See the whole Treaty in Parnell's "History of the Penal Laws against the Irish Catholics," pp. 5-12.

‡ Commons' Journals, vol. ii., p. 644.

The Protestant parliament evinced no lack of zeal in the work of "settling" themselves against their enemies. The fruits of their industry soon appeared on the statute-book, as follows:—

By 7 W. III., c. 4., they deprived "Papists" of the power of educating their own children.

By 7 W. III., c. 5, they deprived "Papists" of the right of bearing arms.

By 9 W. III., c. 1., they banished all the "regulars of the Popish clergy."

And then, with a whimsical and cruel irony, by 9 W. III., c. 2, they *confirmed the treaty of Limerick*, OMITTING the first, fourth, seventh, eighth, ninth, and tenth articles, and falsifying and mutilating all the others. Lest, however, the Protestant interest should be endangered by too much conciliation, they went on, by 9 W. III., c. 3, to prevent Protestants from intermarrying with Papists; and, by two further acts of the next year, they restrained Papists from practising as solicitors, and from being employed as gamekeepers.

The Protestant interest seems not to have prospered according to expectation under this moderate incipient persecution. It was found necessary to abandon the homœopathic regimen of intolerance, and administer larger and more vigorous doses. On the 4th of March, 1704, the royal assent was given to the "Act to prevent the further growth of Popery;"* which act restrained the Popish father, if blessed with a Protestant son, from selling, mortgaging, or otherwise disposing of his estate—deprived him of the custody of his own child, of whatever age (should the little thing fancy or pretend itself a Protestant)—prohibited Papists from buying, or even renting land for more than thirty-one years—and incapacitated the Popish son from inheriting under a Protestant father.

Still, the "further growth of Popery" was not "prevented;" and the Protestant interest clamoured for more protection. In 1707, the Irish Commons met their Lord Lieutenant with thankful acknowledgments of the "benefits they enjoyed in that happy opportunity of meeting under his Excellency's government, to enact such laws as were yet wanting to strengthen the Protestant interest of the kingdom;" and they assured his excellency, that they were met "with firm resolutions to improve that opportunity to the utmost of their power."† The promise was better kept than legislative promises commonly are kept. By 8 Anne, c. 3, "for explaining and amending an Act to prevent the further growth of Popery," they provided (*inter alia*) that any conforming Protestant child might file a bill in Chancery against his Popish father, to reduce the Popish father's estate in fee simple to a life-tenancy (subject to a rent-charge for the Protestant child's "sufficient maintenance"), with remainder in fee to the young knave of a convert; thus sowing distrust and dissension in every Catholic family in Ireland, setting the father against the son, and the son against the father, and holding out a legislative premium to the basest hypocrisy and the blackest ingratitude. The same act offered the *douceur* of a 30*l.* pension to converted Popish priests; and provided for the better discovery of recusant Popish clergymen and schoolmasters, by a curiously arranged sliding scale of duties, ranging from 10*l.* for the usher, up to 50*l.* for the archbishop.

These acts of Queen Anne, reinforced by some minor ones of the same

* 2 Anne, c. 6.

† Commons' Journals, vol. iii., pp. 368-9.

reign, might really seem to have left little or nothing to be done in the way of strengthening the Protestant interest. And, in truth, the main harvest of legislative persecution was by this time pretty well gathered in. Still, some valuable gleanings remained for the delectation of future labourers in the Protestant vineyard; and the ingenious industry of Protestant legislators was still able to find work for itself. The Parliament of George I. amused its leisure with acts for "better regulating" the town of Galway and the city of Kilkenny, and "strengthening the Protestant interest therein;" passed a militia bill with clauses for seizing Papists' horses, and taxing Papists double towards the costs of the militia; excluded Papists from the constabulary and night watch (with liability to pay handsomely for Protestant substitutes), and shut them out from voting at vestries held for the rebuilding and repairing of Protestant churches.

Their successors in the ensuing reign were equally zealous, and more successful. In the first year of George II., by a clause casually introduced, thrown in by the way as an amendment, into an act for regulating elections (1 Geo. II., c. 9), Papists were deprived of the elective franchise; five-sixths of the people of Ireland were swept out of the constitution, such as it was, at one stroke, without notice and without debate. The appetite for persecution kept on growing by what it fed on. By other acts of this reign Papists were forbidden to practise as barristers; Protestant losses from the privateers of Popish enemies were to be made good by Protestant grand jury levies on Popish goods and lands; all marriages to be thereafter celebrated by any Popish priest, between Protestants and Papists, were *annulled*, and every Popish priest who should solemnize such marriage was to be HANGED.

For this last refinement in the art and science of persecution, Ireland was indebted to no ignorant fanatic,—to no brutal and savage bigot,—but to that pink and pattern of gentlemanly decorum, Lord Chesterfield.

If to the preceding we add the Arms Bill of 1776 (15 and 16 Geo. III., c. 21), subjecting every Papist, male or *female*, to fine and imprisonment, *pillory and whipping*, for refusing to deliver up arms, or neglecting to appear, when summoned, before any justice of the peace, to give information against any Papist whom he or she might know to keep arms; and the act of 1782 (21 and 22 George III., c. 48), extending to Ireland all Popish penalties and disabilities then existing in Great Britain,—we believe we shall have given a pretty complete account of that unutterably base and cruel series of legislative enactments known as the Irish Catholic Penal Code—that hideous offspring of religious bigotry, party spite, and class insolence—that system of slow political torture and civil death—that "viciously perfect" system, as Burke calls it, which was—

"Full of coherence and consistency, well digested and well composed in all its parts; a machine of wise and elaborate contrivance, and as well fitted for the oppression, impoverishment, and degradation of a people,—and the debasement, in them, of human nature itself,—as ever proceeded from the perverted ingenuity of man."*

We have given these things in all their odious and disgusting detail, because otherwise the real spirit of Irish Protestant legislation—the *animus* of that Irish Protestant ascendancy which, though with clipped claws and drawn teeth, still growls and snarls, and means the mischief which it is too

* Letter to Sir Hercules Langrishe.

feeble to perform—cannot be thoroughly understood. This Irish Catholic Penal Code was not struck off at a heat—was not made in a hurry, in the tumultuous *furor* of revolution, when men's excited passions goad them on to violences and wrongs from the bare thought of which they would, in quiet times, shrink back appalled;—it was a thing done *on system*; deliberately planned, deliberately executed, slowly and carefully perfected at intervals spread over little less than ninety years. It was devised and matured in times of profound tranquillity. During all those ninety years the Irish Catholics never once revolted, never once showed a disposition or desire to revolt. In the rebellion of 1715—in the rebellion of 1745—the Catholics of Ireland were quiet and loyal. In 1759, when a French invasion was expected in the south, the Catholics came forward with a tender of their allegiance, and with the offer of money aid to government, which offer the Lord Lieutenant “graciously received.” They were all along patient and quiet, from very broken-spiritedness—submissive under every fresh infliction—humbly grateful for the smallest relaxation in the execution of the code of intolerance. Still the system went on; every parliamentary session produced some new act of pains and penalties, or some Commons’ vote for a more stringent execution of existing acts. Some writers on this chapter of Irish history have endeavoured to discover a motive for the enactment of this penal code, in the anxiety of the ascendant party to protect, against all peril or possibility of counter-revolution, estates which they held under the forfeitures and attainders of the times of Cromwell and Charles II. Thus Dr. Madden lays it down that—

“These laws, in which fanaticism and intolerance seem to have been carried to their most savage excess, were not, in fact, derived from either passion. They were designed for the protection of property which had been unjustly acquired, the tenure of which was derived from an act of parliament passed by the possessors themselves, and which was therefore liable to be repealed when they ceased to command a majority in the legislature. * * * We have said that these laws were dictated by self-interest, and not by religious passion; the proof is easy and irrefutable—it is notorious that the laws prohibiting Catholic worship were executed far less strictly than those which excluded from public offices, civil professions, and lucrative industry.”*

We question the validity of this explanation. The fears of self-interest would account for a violent and sweeping proscription, enacted, in the heat of revolutionary conflict, to strengthen the hands of a new and unsettled government; but we cannot so account for a prolonged series of legal tyrannies and insults spread over the greater part of a century. Burke goes nearer to the truth of the matter when he says—

“The new English interest was settled with as solid a stability as anything in human affairs can look for. All the penal laws of that unparalleled code of oppression which were made after the last event [the reduction of Ireland in 1691] were manifestly the effects of *national hatred and scorn towards a conquered people*, whom the victors delighted to trample upon, and were not at all afraid to provoke. *They were not the effect of their fears, but of their security.*”†

That the laws against Catholic worship were less strictly executed than those excluding from civil office and restricting the acquisition of property, is intelligible enough. The latter, from the very nature of them, executed

* “The United Irishmen, their Lives, and Times,” vol. I., pp. 20-21.

† Letter to Sir Hercules Langrishe.

themselves ; but a strict execution of laws for putting down the religious faith of three millions of human beings, is a clear matter-of-fact impossibility. Our own theory of the penal code is a very simple one. That code expresses the insolence of a tyrannical and victorious faction, flushed with conquest, jealous of its monopoly of power, fond of asserting and enjoying that monopoly, proud of its assumed superiority of race, confident in the irresistible might of England to back it in all its misdoings, and bigoted to its own creed as a symbol of military and political ascendancy and English connexion. As Arthur Young says, "*The domineering aristocracy of 500,000 Protestants feel the sweets of having two millions of slaves.*"*

This domineering aristocracy of five hundred thousand Protestants over two millions of slaves we find not in the statute-book alone, nor on the journals of the House of Commons alone.† We meet it everywhere in the Ireland of the eighteenth century, pervading with one universal poison all social relations. The men, and the class of men, who, as legislators, ignored the existence of five-sixths of their own people, as landlords ground the faces of the poor with every imaginable insolence and oppression. Arthur Young's description of the Irish landlord of his time gives us a full-length picture of the oligarch of the Protestant ascendancy, carrying all the vices of the basest legislation that the world has seen into the relations and business of private life :—

"The landlord of an Irish estate, inhabited by Roman Catholics, is a sort of despot, who yields obedience, in whatever concerns the poor, to no law but that of his will. * * * A long series of oppressions, aided by many very ill-judged laws, have brought landlords into a habit of exerting a very lofty superiority, and their vassals into that of an almost unlimited submission. Speaking a language that is despised, professing a religion that is abhorred, and being disarmed, the poor find themselves, in many cases, slaves, even in the bosom of written liberty. * * * A landlord in Ireland can scarcely invent an order which a servant, labourer, or cotter, dares to refuse to execute. Nothing satisfies him but an unlimited submission. Disrespect, or anything tending towards sauciness, he may punish with his cane or his horsewhip, with the most perfect security. A poor man would have his bones broken if he offered to lift his hand in his own defence. *Knocking down* is spoken of in the country in a manner that makes an Englishman stare. * * * Nay, I have heard anecdotes of the lives of people being made free with, without any apprehension of the justice of a jury. But let it not be imagined

* "Tour in Ireland," vol. ii., p. 34.

† These Commons' Journals are well worth consulting, as an index to the spirit of Irish Protestant legislation and legislators. They afford a most apt commentary on the enormities of the Statutes at Large. We there see how careful and zealous were the faithful Protestant Commons that the executive should be in harmony with the legislature. Session after session, we find them voting, and resolving, and addressing, to get the laws against Popery and Papists (such of them as were not in their nature self-executory) more strictly put in force. Whenever anything went wrong, at home or abroad, they *took it out* on the poor Catholics. The familiar designation of five-sixths of the Irish people was, in House-of-Commons' dialect, the *domestic enemy*, the *common enemy*. This was an established phrase in the parliamentary vocabulary. "In the reign of George I.," says Plowden ("History of Ireland," vol. ii., p. 70), "scarcely an address concerning the Catholics reached the crown, which did not brand them with this appellation."

The judicial power faithfully co-operated with the legislative and executive, in giving effect to this wicked and horrible system. The law courts ruled that the penal laws against Popery, being *remedial* statutes,—"*made to prevent a mischief from the increase of Papists,*"—were to be interpreted not, like other penal laws, *strictly* in favour of the culprit, but *liberally* in favour of the Protestant interest. See the Lord Chancellor's *dictum* in *Ogles v. Archbold*.—"Howard's Special Cases on the Popery Laws," p. 18.

that this is common; formerly it happened every day, but law gains ground. It must strike the most careless traveller to see whole strings of cars whipt into a ditch by a gentleman's footman to make way for his carriage; if they are overturned, and broken in pieces, no matter—it is taken in patience; were they to complain, they would, perhaps, be horsewhipped. The execution of the law lies very much in the hands of justices of the peace, many of whom are drawn from the most illiberal class in the kingdom. If a poor man lodges a complaint against a gentleman, or any animal that chooses to call itself a gentleman, and the justice issues out a summons for his appearance, it is a fixed affront, and he will infallibly be called out. * * * It is a fact, that a poor man having a contest with a gentleman, must — but I am talking nonsense, they know their situation too well to think of it. They can have no defence but by means of protection from one gentleman against another, who probably protects his vassal as he would the sheep he intends to eat.

“The colours of this picture are not charged. To assert that all these cases are common, would be an exaggeration; but, to say that an unfeeling landlord will do all this with impunity, is to keep strictly to truth.”*

Add to this, the constant grating and rasping of the CHURCH NUISANCE,—the alien, intrusive church, with tithe-proctors for its apostles, an armed constabulary for its evangelists and field-preachers, and no other divine service to perform than the service of writs,—and what possibly could come of the combination but that which did come—insurrection, outrage, murder; the outbreaking, in all its various forms, of that stern, savage sense of justice, in the rights and might of which down-trodden and crushed humanity will turn again, and take a wild revenge on its oppressors! In the year 1762 was first heard a name of fearful significance in Irish history—the WHITEBOYS; the first, in time, of that series of combinations of misery and famine against oppression, which, continued through the Oak Boys, Right Boys, Defenders, Ribbonmen, and others, have lasted down to our own time—defying all the powers of law and military force, yielding only an occasional and precarious submission to the pacificators of Catholic Associations and Repeal Associations—waging the wild, barbarous war of outraged nature against a yet more barbarous social state, which, in practice as in theory, refused to recognise the existence of the people.

Of these Whiteboys, the following is not the completest account we have met with, but it is the earliest; and, having been written at the time and on the spot by an observant, right-hearted man, it possesses the value and interest of an original authority. In 1764, an English gentleman of Kent, on a tour in the then remote and unknown colony of Ireland, writes thus to his friend:—

“You have frequently met with accounts in the public papers of the insurrections of the *Whiteboys*, as they are called in this country. From the people of fortune who have been sufferers by them, and who, too generally in this kingdom, look on the miserable and oppressed poor in the most contemptible light, the accounts of these insurgents, have, for the most part, been too much exaggerated to be depended on. I have hinted, in the former part of this letter, that the severe treatment and oppression the lowest class of the inhabitants, in some parts of this kingdom, have met with from their priests

* “Tour in Ireland” (made in the years 1776-1778), vol. ii., pp. 29-30.

On this subject of the character and social position of the Irish landlord class, we find the most perfect unanimity in the reports of the English tourists of that time. Thus Bush says, in his “*Hibernia Curiosa*” (1764)—“If in any part of the kingdom there are any wild Irish to be found, it is in the western parts of this province (Connaught), for they have the least sense of law and government of any people in Ireland, I believe, except that of their haughty and tyrannic landlords.”

and subordinate landlords, was the principal cause of those disturbances they have met with from them. I have but too much reason to believe this remark was well grounded, from the observations I had an opportunity of making in the midst of the country where these insurgents have given the greatest disturbance.

"The origin of their denomination of 'Whiteboys' was from the practice of wearing their shirts withoutside of their clothes, the better to distinguish each other in the night-time. It happened that we were at Kilkenny, on our road to Waterford, at the very time of the last considerable insurrection of these unhappy wretches, in the south of Kilkenny county, not far from Waterford. I was naturally led to inquire into the cause of these insurrections, and the pretensions of the insurgents themselves for creating these disturbances.

"From the people of easy and affluent circumstances it is natural to suppose the accounts would be very different from such as were given by those of the same class with the delinquents. By comparing these, however, with the obvious appearance of things in the country, I soon had sufficient reason to believe their disquiet arose, in general, from the severe treatment they met with from their landlords and the lords of the manors, and principally from their clergy. Our road to Waterford lay through the very midst of these unhappy insurgents, and we were consequently advised to take a different route. Why?—whence should be the fear? We have neither deprived them of their common rights nor their potatoes. They have no quarrel with us, who have never injured them. Persuade your insatiable priests, of every denomination, to act themselves the precepts of charity and humanity they preach, and they will be as safe in their houses by night, as we shall probably be, in the midst of them by day.

"We rode through the country, in which they were assembled in great numbers, but the very day before the last considerable engagement they had with the troops quartered at the towns in the neighbourhood, but met with no molestation from any of them. The very next day after we came to Waterford the news was brought of this engagement, about four or five miles from the town. The opinions and representations of the inhabitants of the town were various on the merits of the affair; but it was easy to distinguish the sentiments of the humane from the aggravated representations of those whose inveterate prejudices against these unhappy sufferers instigated them to set these disturbers of the peace of their country in the worst point of view, and, without any apparent candour in their representations, to place the rise of them in an idle, turbulent, and rebellious disposition of the insurgents. *The very officers of the troops wished they would drive the whole fraternity of parsons out of the country; and with good reason; for, if the parsons cannot live here on the great tithes of the corn, and about which they have seldom any disputes with their parishioners, how is the unhappy peasant to subsist on the produce of ten or fifteen perches of potatoes, the whole provision, perhaps for a twelvemonth, for himself and family?—yet even the very tenth of these is demanded by the insatiable, unrelenting priest.*

"On the day after the engagement, we left Waterford for Carrick-on-Suir, and, in our way, met with some of the troops that had been engaged with the Whiteboys, and were asked if we had seen any of them lurking about in companies. But their inquiries were ill-directed; for we would sooner have headed them, and attacked the first parson's house we had met with, than discovered their retreat.

"I made it my business to inquire, in the most friendly manner, of some of these unhappy sufferers of the lowest class, as they fell in my view, the reason of their exposing themselves to so much danger, by raising such disturbances in their country. To which their answers were invariably to this effect:—*that their lives were of little value to them; that the severe and hard dealing they had met with from their priests and the lords of the manors had made them desperate; that the former wanted to reduce the small subsistence they had to live on, and the latter deprived them of the very few privileges and common rights they had, from time immemorial, enjoyed; that against these only were their resentments pointed, and to recover their long-standing privileges was the sole cause of their exposing themselves, or other people, to any danger, and not from any disposition to rebel against their king or the peace of their country.*

"I cannot but acknowledge, in favour of them, that the general civility of the people, with the apparent honesty and candour of their accounts, gave the greatest credit to their representations."*

Such was Irish Whiteboyism—as such is Welsh Rebeccism—a barbarous insurgency of nature against the more barbarous oppression of law; the Jacobinism of poverty taking wild vengeance on the Jacobinism of wealth and power. When the rich man steals the poor man's common, and tithes the poor man's potatoes, let the rich man see well to it that the poor man do not hough his cattle and burn his mansion.

And what had the Protestant-landlord parliament to say to Whiteboyism and Whiteboys?—Why, the Protestant-landlord parliament appointed a select committee to *inquire into the causes and progress of the POPISH INSURRECTION in the province of Munster*.^{*} As if man could not rise up in natural revenge against unnatural oppression, without believing in transubstantiation and seven sacraments! We do not want the evidence of the official declaration in the “London Gazette” (May, 1762) to assure us that “the authors of those riots consisted indiscriminately of persons of different persuasions, and that no marks of disaffection to his Majesty's person or government appeared in any of those people.” Whiteboy and Rebecca riots come not of the Popish persuasion, nor the Wesleyan persuasion—but of the “persuasion” that unjust and cruel law is a nuisance, to be abated and put down.

The “Popish Insurrection” fully answered the purpose of its inventors. There quickly followed that which, in Ireland, always has followed agrarian insurgency—not redress of old grievances, but infliction of new ones; coercion acts, year after year (by one of which, 11 and 12 George III., c. 5, men were to be *hanged*, under certain circumstances, WITHOUT TRIAL); perjury, bought and paid for; terrorism, reduced to system, and conducted *secundum artem* by ministers of law and gospel: and all the other incidents of a Popish plot of the genuine Titus Oates sort. Dr. Curry, writing in 1786, says of this Whiteboy time:—

“Such, during the space of three or four years, was the fearful and pitiable state of the Roman Catholics of Munster, and so general did the panic at length become—so many of the lower sort were already hanged, in goal, or on the informer's lists, that the greater part of the rest fled through fear; so that the land lay untilled for want of hands to cultivate it, and a famine was with reason apprehended. As for the better sort, who had something to lose (and who, for that reason, were the persons chiefly aimed at by the managers of the persecutions), they were at the utmost loss how to dispose of themselves. If they left the country, their absence was construed into a proof of their guilt; if they remained in it, they were in imminent danger of having their lives sworn away by informers and approvers, for the suborning and corrupting of witnesses on that occasion was frequent and barefaced to a degree almost beyond belief. *The very stews were raked, and the goals rummaged, in search of evidence*; and the most notoriously profligate in both were selected and tampered with, to give information of the private transactions and designs of reputable men, with whom they never had any dealing, intercourse, or acquaintance; nay, to whose very persons they were often found to be strangers when confronted at their trial.”†

Of these abominations we need not speak further now. These witnesses of the stews and goals—bought and paid for with the people's money, clothed and fed at the people's cost, drilled in Dublin Castle, and marshalled by

^{*} Commons' Journals, vol. vii., p. 154.

† “Historical and Critical Review of the Civil Wars in Ireland” (1786), vol. ii., p. 282.

In the case of Nicholas Sheehy, parish priest of Clogheen, we have a complete exhibition of the government of that hateful time.—See Madden's “United Irishmen,” Second Series: Historical Introduction.

castle officials into a regular Battalion of Testimony—we shall meet again some thirty years later.

Such was the social and political condition, during the greater part of the eighteenth century, of the people whom law and government "*did not presume to exist*." A sufficient introduction this will ever be, while men are men, to rebellions, fierce and bloody even as that of 1798.

CHAPTER II.

INTRODUCTION CONTINUED—IRISH PARLIAMENT AND PARLIAMENTARY POLITICS OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY—THE PROTESTANT OPPOSITION—WOOD'S HALFPENCE—DOCTOR LUCAS—THE UNDERTAKERS—TOWNSHEND'S GOLDEN DROPS—THE AMERICAN WAR—MR. RICHARD HERON.

WE must again ask leave to detain the reader for awhile on the threshold of our history. In the preceding chapter we have reviewed the social and political condition, during the greater part of the eighteenth century, of that Irish Catholic people whom the law did not presume to exist, and who breathed only under favour of government connivance. We have traced the growth and progress of the savage penal code, and done justice to the "vicious perfection" of that happy constitution in Church and State which indulged the "domineering aristocracy of five hundred thousand Protestants with the sweets of having two millions of slaves." We have followed the domineering aristocracy from the business of law-making into private life, and have seen the grand collective and incorporated tyranny of a Protestant legislature distributing itself over the land, in the countless little individual tyrannies of Protestant landlords—producing a state of things which reacted in the crimes of Whiteboy insurgency, and the yet blacker crimes of a perjurious and partisan administration of justice.

Still, we have not yet written the Introduction to the History of the Irish Rebellion of 1798. That rebellion *was not a Catholic rebellion*; was not, mainly and directly, the outbreak of Catholic discontents; was only partially and indirectly related to the abominations of the penal code. It would be nearer the truth to say, with Lord Plunket, that it was a "Protestant rebellion;" inasmuch as the organisation in which it took its origin began not in the Catholic south, but in the Protestant north, and its ultimate aim—not Catholic ascendancy, but Irish independence—was pointed by the Protestants by whom the rising was first planned. The whole truth of the matter is, however, as we shall afterwards find, that it was neither a Catholic nor a Protestant, but an *Irish* rebellion; with *Protestants for its directing* head, Catholics for its executive members, and Irish national independence for its object. The rebellion of 1798 was the *confluence of two streams* of political discontent, of which the Catholic, although the widest, was not the deepest nor the most rapid; and to write its history,

truly and fully, we must trace each of these streams from its source, down to the point at which their several currents met and mingled in the Society of United Irishmen. The united Irish movement, with the insurrection in which it exploded, was not a movement of Catholics against Protestants, nor of Protestants against Catholics, but of Irishmen against Great Britain. Its genealogy runs thus:—The first Society of United Irishmen grew out of the ashes of the Volunteers, and the disappointed hopes of the legislative revolution of 1782; and the Volunteers grew out of that parliamentary and popular Opposition to British misgovernment, which had shown itself at intervals almost from the beginning of the century, and had gone on steadily widening and deepening from the accession of George III. to the American war. In order, therefore, to be quite at home in the causes of the Irish rebellion of 1798, we must review now the political relations, not of one section of the population of Ireland to another, but of Ireland itself to Great Britain; and trace the action and re-action of that system of venality, wastefulness, oppression, teasing restriction, and shameless corruption which England inflicted on Protestant Ireland, as the price of helping Protestant Ireland to enjoy the sweets of tyranny over its millions of Popish slaves.

For the present, then, we take leave of the Irish Catholic people—those five-sixths of the people of Ireland that were not a people. The penal code did its work; making its victims, for the greater part of a century, a perfect social nonentity, without political action or influence, without political existence—in a word, *dead in law*. It is truly said by Plowden—

“The reign of Queen Anne established a most important, though a much unheeded principle of observation, which the impartial investigator of the Irish annals cannot lose sight of. The numerical body of the people having been effectually excluded from taking an active part in the affairs of the nation, every important or embarrassing question that has arisen between Great Britain and Ireland, affecting the political situation of the two nations, from the revolution to the accession of his present Majesty, has been as completely cleared and disembarassed of any interference, interest, or influence of the body of Irish Roman Catholics, as if they had no actual existence. All national differences, complaints, and grievances have been from Protestants to Protestants. * * * It is a political paradox, though an historical truth, that in the agitation of every national question during the last century, the sense, the interest, or the influence of the majority of the nation, has not thrown the weight of a scruple into the scales.”*

Leaving, therefore, the Irish Catholic people in their condition of political impotence and torpor—with the *nota bene* that they are not dead, but sleeping, and that they and their wrongs will rise up again in the day of national reckoning—we shall speak now of the “differences, complaints, and grievances” which arose during the eighteenth century between Protestant Ireland and Protestant England, and which gradually created that spirit of Anglo-Irish nationality which, after years of unavailing parliamentary conflict, effected a legal revolution in 1782, and attempted a military revolution in 1798.

The revolution of 1688—in Ireland we should call it rather, dating from the surrender of Limerick, the revolution of 1691—placed the Protestant Anglo-Irish colony in a condition of servitude and vassalage to Great Britain, hardly more tolerable than that which the Protestant colony at the

* “Historical Review of the State of Ireland,” vol. i., p. 221.

same time imposed on their Catholic fellow-countrymen. Ireland had then a "domestic parliament," so called; but it was a slave, as well as a tyrant parliament, impotent for all purposes but those of domestic corruption and oppression. It was a parliament which did not possess either the full power, or the sole power, of legislating for the country which it nominally governed. The parliament of Ireland, under Poyning's Law,* had no proper and effectual initiative. It could only frame what were called *heads of bills*, which heads of bills must first be submitted to the Lord Lieutenant and his privy council, who might, or might not, at their discretion, transmit them to England for the approval of the English crown and privy council—whence they might, or might not return, altered or unaltered, at *their* discretion; and only after this double process of filtration could any net *residuum* of legislation begin to be realised. The Irish House of Commons was at full liberty to debate and vote what had been debated and voted twice over already in the Irish and English councils. This singular sort of domestic legislature had not even a *veto* on Irish legislation. The British parliament claimed and exercised the right of legislating at pleasure, over the heads of the despised and powerless assembly in College Green—cramping Irish trade, regulating the Irish church, directing the sale of the forfeited estates of Irish rebels, and, in all matters, managing Irish business according to their own liking, as if Ireland had had no parliament of her own at all.† And, on the right being feebly and hesitatingly contested by the Irish peers, early in the reign of George I., all doubts were quickly cleared away by a declaratory act (6 George I., c. 5.) extinguishing the appellate jurisdiction assumed by the Irish House of Lords, and establishing the right (or the might) of the British legislature to make laws for Ireland, and levy taxes on Ireland, as for and on any other colonial dependency of the British crown. Really, one feels a sort of pleasure in recording this. It was a fit and fair retribution: as the Irish parliament ignored the existence of the Irish people, the English government ignored the existence of the Irish Parliament.

This claim of Great Britain to legislate for Ireland was not a theoretical and barren claim; it was fruitful of practical results, systematically aimed at the degradation and impoverishment of all that part of the Irish people whose degradation and impoverishment were not already sufficiently provided for by the domestic legislature. "The parliament of England," says Lord Clare, in his speech on the Union, "seems to have considered the permanent debility of Ireland as the best security of the British crown, and the Irish parliament to have rested the security of the colony upon maintaining a perpetual and impassable barrier against the ancient inhabitants of the country." For this "permanent debility" the British parliament made a very early and effectual provision, by *crippling the trade of Ireland*. In the year 1698, the English House of Lords, in their address to the crown, lament and complain of "the *GROWING manufacture of cloth in Ireland*, both by the cheapness of all sorts of necessities for life, and goodness of materials for making all manner of cloth"—(just as an English House of Lords might complain now of the growing agriculture of Ohio or Tamboff, both by the cheapness of all sorts

* Sir Edward Poyning was the Attorney-General of Henry VII.

† See Plowden's "Historical Review," vol. i., p. 229.

of necessaries for life, and the goodness of materials for raising all manner of grain)—and they beseech his Majesty to crush this growing manufacture of cloth in Ireland; to “declare, in the most public and effectual way that may be, to all your subjects of Ireland, that the growth and increase of the woollen manufacture there hath long, and will ever be looked upon with great jealousy by all your subjects of this kingdom.”* His Majesty replied, that “he would take care to do what their lordships desired;” and, accordingly, by 10 and 11 William III., c. 10, of the English parliament, the exportations of all wool, or woollen manufacture, from Ireland, to any country whatever, was prohibited, under penalty of confiscation, imprisonment, and transportation.† The Irish House of Commons bitterly complained of this piece of tyranny, at their next meeting in 1703—but they complained in vain. If England helped them to prevent the further growth of Popery, they must allow England to prevent the further growth of their trade. It is pleasing to learn that from this woollen prohibition Protestant Ireland was the chief sufferer.

This tyranny of the “mother” country, although submitted to perforce, as the condition of that foreign support without which domestic tyranny could not have held its ground against the poor Catholics, was not submitted to patiently. The men of the Protestant ascendancy had English blood in their veins. More than half of them were Presbyterians, descendants of Cromwell’s soldiers and partisans; the “spawn of the old Covenant” against prelacy; well leavened with puritanism and republicanism; not over loyal, either to Church or King; vehemently, and, on occasion, riotously opposed to the notion of a union with Great Britain;‡ and so little in love with the Protestant church, when their pockets were concerned, as to vote the levying of *tithe of agistment injurious to the Protestant interest*.§ This puritan, republican temper of a large portion of the Protestant population of Ireland was the germ, first, of a steady and growing parliamentary opposition to the measures of the English government, and, ultimately, of the Volunteer Association, and the Revolution of 1782. Not among the debilitated, degraded, and pauperised Catholics of the south, but among the Presbyterian Protestants of the north and the metropolis, did the first sign appear of that new and important

* Lords’ Journals, vol. xvi. p. 314.

† See Hely Hutchinson’s “Commercial Restraints on Ireland,” 1780.

English restrictions on Irish trade began, as early as 1663, with 15 Charles II., c. 7, whimsically entitled “An act for the encouragement of trade.” A similar legislative curiosity of the same reign (18 Charles II., c. 2) styles the importation of cattle from Ireland a *common nuisance*.

In addition to the above, it is worth noting, that between 1740 and 1780 there were no fewer than twenty-four embargoes laid by the British Government on all Irish commerce whatever. One of these lasted three years.

‡ There were Protestant anti-union riots at Dublin in the reign of George II.—Plowden’s “Historical Review,” vol. i. p. 327.

§ Commons’ Journals, vol. vi., p. 673.

This tithe-of-agistment vote had important consequences. It threw the burden of the church off the rich Protestant proprietor, whose land was chiefly under pasturage, and on to the poor Catholic cottier, whose little patch of potato ground was unprotected by Protestant Commons’ votes. It rendered pasturage so much more profitable than tillage, that an extensive consolidation of farms, with a clearing out of tenantry, ensued; the result of which was the emigration to America of vast numbers of brave and resolute men who hated British rule, and were ready in due time to fight, heart and hand, the battles of their adopted country.

political phenomenon—an independent Irish nationality. This feeling of Protestant Irish nationality gave early indications of its existence. When Molyneux, one of the members for Dublin University, published his celebrated treatise, "The Case of Ireland's being Bound by Acts of Parliament in England, Stated" (1698), the doctrine of Irish independence found willing and eager listeners, both in parliament and out of it; and though the book was formally condemned by a vote of the English Commons, and ordered to be burned by the hangman, yet not the less did this first assertion, by an Irish Protestant, of Irish nationality and independence, sink deep into the heart of his country. It efficiently aided, as it significantly prognosticated, the great national struggle of 1782, when the English interest in Ireland openly proclaimed itself an Irish interest, and refused, sword-in-hand, to be any longer "bound by acts of parliament in England."

The first political occurrence which developed powerfully and with effect, though transiently, a national and anti-English feeling in Ireland, was the business of *Wood's halfpence*; a small matter—as Mr. Croall's mail-coach contract is a small matter—though leading, like that, to important results. About the middle of the reign of George I. one Wood got a patent from the English government for coining copper halfpence and farthings for Irish circulation, to the amount of 108,000*l.*; which coinage he made of such base material, that the whole mass together was not worth the odd 8,000*l.* All Ireland rose up against the insulting cheat. Parliament-houses, magistrates, corporations, grand juries—all protested and agitated together against the English government and its thievish patentee; the powers of the press were, for the first time in Irish history, evoked into action; Dean Swift's famous *Drapier* letters were cried about the streets for a penny each, and pasted up in cottages and ale-houses all over the country; and the matter ended in the rescinding of the patent, the calling-in of the halfpence, and the triumph of the Irish people over the British government. The business in itself seems trivial enough, but it was no trifle in the eyes of the English cabinet and its adherents. Primate Boulter, the wily and dexterous manager of what was called the English interest in Ireland, wrote, in 1724, to the government at home—

"We are at present in a very bad state, and the people so poisoned with apprehensions of Wood's halfpence, that I do not see there can be any hopes of justice against any person for seditious writings, if he does but mix somewhat about Wood in them. * * * Our pamphlets, and the discourses of some people of weight, *run very much upon the independency of this kingdom*; and, in our present state, that is a *very popular notion*. * * * I find, by my own and others' inquiries, that the people of every religion, country, and party here, are alike set against Wood's halfpence, and that *their agreement in this has had a very unhappy influence on the state of this nation*, by bringing on intimacies between Papists and Jacobites, and the Whigs, who before had no correspondence with them."*

A most ingenious confession of the divide-and-govern policy, and a most apt illustration of what was meant by "the English interest in Ireland." The agreement of all sects and classes of Irishmen in a common Irish interest, was a "most unhappy influence on the state of

* "Letters written by his Excellency Hugh Boulter, D.D., Lord Primate of all Ireland," vol. i., pp. 3-8.

this nation." Altogether, this affair of Wood's halfpence, trivial-looking as it is at this distance of time, is not without its significance for us, and is well entitled to its place in our introduction to the History of the Rebellion of 1798. It denoted the birth of that new power—an IRISH PEOPLE—which produced the events of 1782 and of 1798. In fact, this popular opposition to the Englishman's spurious copper was the first Association of United Irishmen.

And truly Ireland wanted something to rouse her from political torpor, and spirit her up to do battle with the incubus of the English interest. Anything more corrupt, more anti-national, more utterly sordid and vile than the Anglo-Irish government of that time, this world has not often seen. The system is thus described in the general, by Lord Clare, in his speech on the Union :—

"The executive government was committed nominally to a Viceroy, but essentially to Lords Justices, selected from the principal state officers of the country, who were entrusted with the conduct of what was called the "King's business," but might, with more propriety, have been called *the business of the Lords Justices*. The Viceroy came to Ireland for a few months only in two years, and returned to England perfectly satisfied with his mission, if he did not leave the affairs of the English government worse than he found them; and the Lords Justices, in his absence, were entrusted implicitly with the means of consolidating an aristocratic influence, which made them the necessary instruments of the English government."

And the legislative was like the executive; the instrument was worthy of the hands that used it. That the Irish parliament of that time was a rotten parliament—representative, neither directly nor indirectly, of any popular principle or power, but only of the money power and the aristocratic power—is a fact which we need scarcely be at the pains of putting on record. But the specific character of its rottenness, and the nature of the means by which it was managed, are perhaps less generally known. Dr. Thomas Campbell, writing in the year 1777, of a system which by that time had been pretty well broken up, but which, during the first half of the century, had reigned with little disturbance, says—

"In this nation are three or four grandees, who have such an influence in the House of Commons that their coalition would at any time give them a clear majority upon any question. It has therefore always been a maxim of government to disunite these factious chiefs. And, still further to disable opposition, it has been thought expedient to disengage, as much as possible, the followers from their leaders. This was attempted by Lord Chesterfield so early as the year 1745; but his stay was too short to effect it.

"Formerly these principals used to stipulate with each new Lord Lieutenant, whose office was biennial and residence but for six months, upon what terms they would carry the King's business through the house, so that they might not improperly be called *Undertakers*. They provided that the disposal of all court favours, whether places, pensions, or preferments, should pass through their hands, in order to keep their suite in an absolute state of dependence upon themselves. All applications were made by the leader, who claimed as a right the privilege of gratifying his friends in proportion to their numbers. Whenever such demands were not complied with, then the measures of government were sure to be crossed and obstructed; and the session of parliament became a constant struggle for power, between the heads of parties who used to force themselves into the office of Lord Justice, according to the prevalence of their interest."

Can it surprise us that the same writer who records this of the government of Ireland, tells us of its people, that he found them "either moping under the sullen gloom of inactive indigence, or blindly asserting

* "Philosophical Survey of the South of Ireland," p. 56.

the rights of nature in nocturnal insurrections, attended with circumstances of ruinous devastation and savage cruelty."

These Undertakers, who, as Lord Charlemont says, "were certainly well fitted to preside at the funeral of the common weal," constituted the *aristocratic influence* spoken of by Lord Clare. The system was eventually found to be too difficult and uncertain of management, and it was broken up—by whom, and how, we shall learn presently.

Meanwhile, a public national spirit continued to work and grow in the Protestant section of the population of Ireland, and from time to time gave signs of life. The merit of organising a regular and progressively powerful popular and parliamentary opposition to the anti-national government of the Undertakers and the English cabinet belongs to the once-celebrated, but now nearly forgotten, Dr. Charles Lucas. Dr. Lucas, originally a Dublin apothecary, afterwards member of parliament for Dublin, and for nearly thirty years leader of the Irish opposition to the English interest, was a man of limited knowledge, narrow and poorly-cultivated intellect, and violent temper—but bold, ardent, active and, for anything that appears to the contrary, thoroughly honest and unselfish. He began his political career about the year 1745, with a vehement and, no doubt, excellently well-merited attack, on certain civic abuses in the corporation of Dublin, in the course of which he wrote and spoke much "sedition," both against the Dublin corporation in particular and the British government in general. The Castle was frightened, and determined to crush him. Passages were selected from his writings, for the perusal of the Attorney-General; and the House of Commons, whose privileges he had defended, voted him (according to a certain short and sharp way they had of dealing with men and things they did not like) *an enemy to his country*. To avoid the storm, Lucas escaped to England, and there he remained till the accession of George III., when he returned to Ireland, and was sent to agitate in parliament as member for the city of Dublin.

From about this period, Irish politics assume a tone of higher and more sustained importance. For some years previously, the English interest had been progressively becoming more and more an independent Irish interest. Within the walls of the Irish House of Commons an occasional and incipient opposition had made its appearance, which, on some questions of parliamentary privilege, could now and then obtain a majority, to the infinite perplexity of the King's friends and hinderance of the King's business. In 1749 the Commons commenced a war of votes and resolutions with the British cabinet, in defence of their constitutional right to direct the appropriation of surplus revenue without the previous consent of the crown. But so little store was set on Irish Commons' votes and resolutions, that the question was cut short by a King's letter, quietly drawing the money in dispute out of the treasury; in revenge for which affront the Commons speedily asserted their dignity (1751) by the bold stroke of expelling from their house one Mr. Arthur Jones Nevil, a functionary of government, for peculation, embezzlement and fraud. This appropriation question continued to be a subject of conflict, and a test of strength, between the new Irish interest and the English cabinet. It was re-opened in 1753, by the Lord Lieutenant (the Duke of Dorset) informing the Commons on their meeting, that his Majesty would "graciously con-

sent" to the surplus revenue being appropriated—as they, in fact, intended to appropriate it—in reduction of the public debt. The Commons passed heads of a bill to that effect, without mentioning the gracious consent of Majesty, and afterwards rejected the bill, in consequence of the ministry having altered it by insertion of the consent. The parliamentary opposition found vigorous coadjutors out of doors. The Viceroy was obliged, in consequence of the mootings of this unpopular topic, to make his escape out of the country, under escort of the military and of a mob hired and made drunk for the occasion.

This appropriation question of the reign of George II. was something more, in its results, than a mere dispute of parliamentary form and privilege. It powerfully aided and quickened the growth of a spirit of nationality and independence, both in parliament and out of it. It communicated life and heat to the House of Commons of Ireland;—so rapid was the importance which it gave to that assembly, *that a borough sold in 1754 for three times as much as was given in 1750.** The illustration places in rather an equivocal light the practical worth of the new parliamentary opposition, with regard to the real interests of the country. Still, it was better thus than not at all. It serves to show the rising power and spirit of the Opposition, that a few years later (1757) we find them overhauling the pension list, and bandying sharp resolutions and messages thereupon with their Lord Lieutenant.†

The death of George II., and the consequent summoning of a new parliament, gave fresh strength to the Opposition. The first years of the new reign were occupied with discussion and agitation on the question of limiting the duration of parliaments. Hitherto, the Irish House of Commons had continued undisturbed, unless dissolved by prerogative, during the sovereign's life-time. The parliament of George II. had sat through the entire reign of that king—a period of thirty-three years; in which time the most retentive memory must have grown superannuated, and outlived all recollection of constituents (if any), responsibility, and popular control. The Irish member's tenure of his seat was, in fact, as against the people, a life estate—as against the crown, a tenancy at will, of which prerogative might at any moment dispossess him. The jobbery, venality, rapacity, oppression and corruption, of every kind and degree, resulting from such a state of things, made this life-tenancy of seats in parliament a glaring, first-class grievance—among the earliest which the new Irish interest set itself to redress. For the first eight years of George III.'s reign, accordingly, the grand measure of the patriots was a Septennial Bill. The history of this business is instructively and curiously illustrative, both of the character of the Irish parliament and of its constitutional relations to the British Government. Of course it was not in human nature that a measure for abridging their own tenure of power should be especially acceptable to a majority of the new

* Hardy's "Life of the Earl of Charlemont," vol. i., p. 81.

† The iniquities of an Irish pension list in the middle of the eighteenth century, are of that sort of things which may be "more easily imagined than described." In 1763, a member of the House of Commons pithily observes:—"It is written, 'that the wages of sin is death:' but whoever will look into our list of pensions will have reason to say that 'the wages of sin is—Ireland!'"—*Debates Relative to the Affairs of Ireland, in the years 1768 and 1764.*

House of Commons. Yet the pressure from without, and the resolute pertinacity of the minority within, made it not altogether safe or pleasant to reject that measure; seeing that Dublin mobs could, upon occasion, subject unpopular representatives to a description of "individual and personal responsibility," more stringent and summary than constitutional. The operation of Poyning's Law suggested to the embarrassed legislators an easy and fair-seeming solution of the difficulty, by which they fondly hoped to earn a cheap popularity, without seriously imperilling the happy constitution of their honourable house; and that was, *to pass the heads* of the hated Septennial Bill, trusting to the Lord Lieutenant and his council—or, in their default, to the English ministry and council, to stop the further progress of a measure so distasteful and inconvenient to all parties.

This ingenious policy was successfully adopted in two successive sessions. Once and again did a number of the Undertakers and their adherents, sufficient to make a majority, coalesce with the patriots in passing the heads of a Septennial Bill, which they were well assured would pass on to an early grave in the waste-paper stores of the privy council, and trouble them no more. But this was not a game to be played on for ever. Metropolitan and county meetings and petitions disclosed a fast-growing popular determination not to be longer trifled with by Undertaking chicanery and ministerial obstruction. In the session of 1767-8, the people petitioned and agitated once more; and—

"Once more the House of Commons sent the bill to their good friends the privy council, enjoying in public the applause of the nation for having passed it, and in secret the notable triumph that it would be so soon destroyed. But here matters assumed a different aspect; the privy council began to feel that this scene of deception had been long enough played by the Commons; and being, with some reason, very much out of humour that the plaudits of the nation should be bestowed on its representatives, whilst his Majesty's privy council, by the artifice of some leaders, was rendered odious to the country, resolved to drop the curtain at once, and certified the bill to the English privy council—satisfied that it would encounter a much more chilling reception there than it had met with even from themselves. The aspect of affairs was again changed. The Irish privy council had disappointed the Commons, and the English cabinet now resolved to disappoint and punish both. Enraged with the House of Commons for its dissimulation, with the aristocracy for not crushing the bill at once; and, amid all this confusion and resentment, not a little elated to have it at length in their power completely to humiliate that aristocracy, which, in the true spirit of useful, obsequious servitude, not only galled the people, but sometimes mortified and controlled the English cabinet itself; afraid of popular commotions in Ireland; feeling, as English gentlemen, that the Irish public was in the right, as statesmen, that it would be wise to relinquish at once what, in fact, could be but little longer tenable; they sacrificed political leaders, privy councillors, and parliament, to their fears, their hatred, their adoption of a new policy; and, though last, not the least motive, it is to be hoped, their just sense of the English constitution. They returned the bill, and gave orders for the calling of a new parliament."*

* Hardy's "Life of the Earl of Charlemont," vol. i., p. 252.

The context of the above deserves quotation, as a most characteristic piece of private political history—

"It is impossible not to mention, in this place, an anecdote which I heard from Lord Charlemont, as well as others. He happened at this time to dine with one of the great parliamentary leaders; a large company, much drink, and much good humour. In the midst of this festivity, the papers of the last English packet, which had just come in, were brought into the room, and given to the master of the house. Scarcely had he read

One of the first acts of the first octennial parliament (the privy council had altered the proposed term of seven years into eight) was indicative of the altered tone of Irish parliamentary politics. In 1769 the Commons refused to proceed with a money bill, because it had not originated in their House.

Yet the people profited nothing by all this petitioning and agitating, and parliamentary assertion of privilege. The most tangible and indubitable effect of the Octennial Bill was that it *enhanced the value of borough-property*, by bringing the commodity oftener into the market. Distress went on, crime went on,* and political corruption and venality went on, in an ever-increasing ratio of celerity and extent. The government by Undertakers having been found, by recent experience, too troublesome of management and too uncertain of result to secure the progress of the King's business, or promote the convenience of the King's friends, a new system was determined on by the British cabinet, and

one or two of them, when it appeared that he was extremely agitated. The company was alarmed.

“ ‘What’s the matter?—Nothing, we hope, has happened, that——’

“ ‘Happened!’ exclaimed their kind host, and swearing most piteously—‘Happened!—the Septennial Bill is returned!’

“A burst of joy from Lord Charlemont, and the very few real friends of the bill who happened to be present. The majority of the company, confused, and indeed almost astounded, began, after the first involuntary dejection of their features, to recollect that they had, session after session, openly voted for this bill, with many an internal curse, heaven knows! But still they had uniformly been its loudest advocates; and, therefore, it would be somewhat decorous not to appear too much cast down at their own unexpected triumph. In consequence of these politic reflections, they endeavoured to adjust their looks to the joyous occasion as well as they could. But they were soon spared the awkwardness of assumed felicity.

“ ‘The bill is not only returned,’ continued their chieftain, ‘but—but—the parliament is DISSOLVED!’

“Hypocrisy far more disciplined than theirs, could lend its aid no further. If the first intelligence which they heard was tolerably doleful, this was complete discomfiture. They sank into taciturnity, and the leaders began to look in fact, what they had been so often politically called, a company of undertakers. They had assisted at the parliamentary funeral of some opponents; and now, like Charles V., though without his satiety of worldly vanities, they were to assist at their own. In the return of this fatal bill was their political existence completely inurned. Lord Charlemont took advantage of their silent mood, and quietly withdrew from this group of statesmen, than whom a more ridiculous, rueful set of personages in his life, he said, he never beheld. The city, in consequence of the intelligence of the evening, was in a tumult of gratitude and applause; illuminations were everywhere diffused, and our unintentionally victorious senators were obliged, on their return home, to stop at the end of almost every street, and huzza, very dismally, with a very merry, very patriotic, and very drunken populace.”

* Much of the social condition of a country is to be gathered from its newspapers, especially from its newspaper advertisements. We have before us a copy of the *Dublin Mercury* of September 2, 1769, in which are six Dublin Castle “Proclamations by the Lord Lieutenant and Council of Ireland,” offering rewards for the discovery and conviction of criminals. The catalogue of crimes stands thus:—

Unlawful combination and outrage by Dublin artificers;

Five cases of felonious maiming, cutting, stabbing, and houghing cattle, by Tories, robbers, and rapparees of the Popish religion;

Two threatening letters;

One abduction;

One murder and robbery; and

One assault and robbery.

Lord Townshend was the Viceroy (from 1767 to 1771) appointed to conduct it. The new system may be described in brief, as consisting in casting out devils by the prince of devils. The plan was, to break down the political monopoly of the aristocracy by throwing open the trade in bribes, places and pensions to a more general competition; abolishing all intervention of the Undertakers between the dispensers of patronage and its recipients; and bringing the resources of the Castle treasury to bear directly on every separate vote.

"The system in part succeeded," says Plowden, "but by means ruinous to the country. The subalterns were not to be detached from their chiefs but by similar though more powerful means than those by which they had been enlisted under their banners. The streams of favour became not only multiplied, but enlarged; consequently, the source of remuneration was the sooner exhausted. Every individual now looked up directly to the fountain-head, and claimed and received more copious draughts."*

This new viceregal representative of the English interest in Ireland had great faith in the efficacy of well-directed bribery. Thus his lordship evinced his zeal for the Protestant cause, by raising the pension for conforming Catholic priests from 30*l.* to 40*l.*; which the wits of the day called *Townshend's Golden Drops*.† If the golden drops failed of their intended effect on the faith of the Catholic priesthood, the disappointment was more than compensated by the rapidity and vigour of their operation on Protestant parliamentary patriotism. The Viceroy prospered so well in his mission that before the close of his administration he could, on almost any question, ensure the votes of two-thirds of the House; and he left things in smooth and pleasant train for his successor, Lord Harcourt.

Successes of this kind are commonly followed, in the history of nations, by a severe and exact reckoning-day. The commencement of the American war found Ireland with a bankrupt exchequer,‡ an imbecile government, and an impoverished, distressed, and disaffected people. In the north and the metropolis, pauperised and mendicant manufacturers, ruined by the stoppage of their American trade, disabled by the same cause from emigrating, and compelled to stay crowded up at home, a daily accumulating mass of discontent and incipient insurgency; in the south and west, the provision-trade crushed by embargoes, which, as Arthur Young complains, sacrificed and plundered a whole kingdom to enrich three or four London contractors; at Dublin Castle, bribery beginning to feel the bottom of a beggared and exhausted treasury, and force

* Plowden's "Historical Review," vol. i., p. 386.

† This nobleman was both witty himself, and the cause of wit in others. Endless were the good things said by him and of him, both by friend and foe. A lively picture of the politics of the time is to be found in "Baratariana," a collection of squibs and pasquinades published during this administration.

‡ The financial policy of that time and its results are tersely stated by Grattan, in his speech on the expenses of the nation, February 2, 1778:—

"A corrupt and jobbing policy has driven us to attempt new taxes, which force the condition of trade, and are a premium to smugglers; and a new swarm of smugglers give birth or pretence to a new swarm of revenue officers, with new burdens on the people, and with an army of penal laws; so that the old deficiency of revenue is brought about again by the smuggler who defrauds, and by the job of government that intercepts the revenue, and the practice of running in debt is thus rendered immortal."

giving way under the necessity of shipping soldiers over the Atlantic; every branch of revenue failing; a militia law of pressing necessity lying by, unexecuted, for want of funds; the Catholics, too, beginning to arise from the death-sleep of eighty years, and seeking from the weakness of government what they might vainly have implored till doomsday of its justice; everywhere a fierce and sullen despondency, relieved only by a malicious satisfaction at seeing England in difficulty and danger, and by hearty sympathy with a cause which all Irishmen felt to be, in its principles and tendencies, *their* cause;—such was the condition of Ireland during the first years of the contest of Great Britain with her revolted North American colonies. National insolvency at home and war abroad had completely paralysed the right arm of the “English Interest.” The old system of Catholic vassalage to Protestant ascendancy, and of Irish vassalage to British ascendancy, was fairly worn out and come to a stand-still: and already (in 1777) the British minister had begun to make up his mind to a *modicum* of commercial and Catholic emancipation, as the only means of saving Ireland’s allegiance to the British crown.

As the war went on, matters became daily more critical. The American capture of a British army (October, 1777) was the signal for France, and afterwards for Spain and Holland, to recognise and aid the young Transatlantic republic. The privateers of the allies swept the seas; a French invasion of Ireland was menaced and expected, and Ireland had no troops to repel invasion; and in the month of April, 1778, the *Ranger* privateer, CAPTAIN PAUL JONES, made a flying visit to the harbour of Belfast. The towns-folk of Belfast, through their chief magistrate, applied to Dublin Castle for protection; and Dublin Castle made answer, by the mouth of one Mr. Richard Heron, a very worthy but not over-bright law-agent and land-steward, whom fortune had cruelly promoted to be Lord Lieutenant’s Secretary, *that it had no protection to give*. The following is a curiosity worth preserving.* Little did good dull Mr. Richard Heron, who could not so much as write a business letter in English, dream that his bad grammar would ever come to be good history:—

“*Dublin Castle, Aug. 14th, 1778.*”

“SIR,—My Lord Lieutenant having received information that there is reason to apprehend three or four privateers, in company, may in a few days make attempts on the northern coasts of this kingdom—by his Excellency’s commands I give you the earliest account thereof, in order that there may be a careful watch, and immediate intelligence given to the inhabitants of Belfast, in case any party from such ships should attempt to land.

“The greatest part of the troops being encamped near Clonmell and Kinsale, his excellency *cannot* at present send *no* further military force to Belfast, than a troop or two of horse, or part of a company of invalids; and his Excellency desires you will acquaint me, by express, whether a troop or two of horse may be properly accommodated in Belfast, so long as it may be proper to continue them in that town, in addition to the other two troops now there.

“I have the honour to be, &c.,

“RICHARD HERON.”

This is a fit ending of one chapter of Irish history, as we shall find it to be the worthy beginning of another. A government which did not re-

* We find it in Madden’s “United Irishmen,” vol. ii., p. 290.

cognise the existence of five-sixths of its subjects, and had no protection to give to the remaining one-sixth—it was time, by all the laws of heaven and earth, that men saw the last of this.

CHAPTER III.

THE VOLUNTEERS OF 1782—"NOW IS OUR TIME"—MISERABLE STATE OF HIS MAJESTY'S TREASURY—DRAGON'S TEETH SPRUNG UP ARMED MEN—"FREE TRADE, OR ELSE"—SOMETHING MUST BE DONE—A GREAT ORIGINAL TRANSACTION—SOMETHING IS DONE—LAWYER'S DOUBTS.

Now is our time, said Lord Carhampton to Dr. Jebb, on hearing of the answer of Dublin Castle to Belfast. Truly, it was their time; and the time found men to do its work. The Irish government had abdicated its functions, and forfeited its trust; had refused to the people that protection, the power and the will to give which are the elementary conditions of all government whatever—and the Irish people must protect and help themselves. The Irish people, thus tried, were not found wanting.

Our introductory retrospect of the history of Ireland has now brought us to the epoch of the VOLUNTEER INSTITUTION—that brightest spot in the whole of the Irish annals, which shows all the more brightly in contrast with the gloom that precedes it, and the darker horrors that follow—that time when "the whole faculty of the nation was braced up to the act of her own deliverance,"* and achieved her deliverance in the shape of a brief and illusory independence; that independence to be followed by a worse slavery than before—slavery to the corrupt and tyrannical domestic legislature which popular effort had emancipated from foreign control, by years of unsuccessful agitation and defeated rebellion, and ultimately by the extinction of her separate nationality in a legislative union with Great Britain.

In the year 1778 the old system of Anglo-Irish government had fairly worn itself out. The *régime* of corruption and force had expended the uttermost farthing of its resources, and had nothing to go on with; and the whole thing collapsed and came down—died of sheer inanition. On the 30th of April, in that year, the Lord Lieutenant (Buckingham) writes to Lord North as doleful and piteous an epistle as ever insolvent debtor indited from a sponging-house to a wealthy but penurious relative, informing him, "with great concern," of the "miserable state of his Majesty's treasury;" detailing the utter failure of every one of his financial expedients, the stoppage of all treasury payments except for indispensable military uses, and the entire exhaustion of a banker's loan of 20,000*l.*; and warning the minister, that if a considerable supply were not sent out without loss of time, "it cannot be said how fatal the consequence may

* Grattan.

be.”* The considerable supply did not arrive, Lord North having more than enough work of his own in hand, in crushing rebellious colonies over the Atlantic; and after two or three further applications, each rising above the other in urgency, the Viceroy writes by express, on the 17th of May—

“I have found further disappointments in respect to money; the bankers to whom I had made application for a further loan of 20,000*l.* having this morning returned an answer, that the distresses of the public with regard to money are so uncommonly great, that it is not in their power, though very much in their inclination, to give that assistance to government that they would do at another time. I am therefore reduced to the necessity of stopping the movement of the troops until further orders. * * * Unless a supply can be obtained from England, it will be absolutely impossible to carry forward those preparations which are absolutely necessary for the defence of Ireland in case of any attack.”†

The supplies not coming, or not coming at such time and in such quantities as to render the absolutely necessary preparations in any way possible, Ireland was thrown on her own resources; and never, in all history, did a people develop richer resources on the call of a great occasion. The national distress was deep, but the national heart rose superior to it all. To the answer which Dublin Castle sent to the people's demand for protection, the people's rejoinder was a VOLUNTEER ARMY. Already had some detached volunteer corps been formed in different parts of the country, by public-spirited individuals, in anticipation of local exigencies; but with the summer of 1778, the arming became general and systematic. The metropolis, the counties, the large towns of the north—each poured forth their hosts of armed citizens, self-paid and self-commissioned; even the poor outcast Catholic remembered the country which had forgotten him, and was ready to shed his heart's blood for a constitution which had not deigned to recognise his existence. The enthusiasm of nationality brought out the many, and necessity and fashion enlisted the few who might else have stood aloof; and, in a few months, Ireland had an army of citizen-soldiers, to the number of forty thousand and more, well appointed, well disciplined, and well officered, with the flower of the democracy in its ranks, and the heads of the aristocracy for its commanders-in-chief. The government was astounded. Dublin Castle seems to have been afraid, like the Whigs after the Reform Bill, that it was too strong. The notion of an army not commissioned and officered by the crown‡ was altogether new. The whole thing was decidedly unconstitutional—without a precedent in the law books. The government was now between two fires; the French on one side, and the volunteers on the other—with an empty exchequer and a paralysed executive in the middle. It could not possibly do without the volunteers, and yet it did not very well know what to do with them. This embarrassment is very amusingly evinced in the correspondence which from time to time passed on the subject, between Dublin and St. James's. On the 24th of May, 1779, the Lord Lieutenant writes to Lord Weymouth, in reference to “this delicate subject,” as he calls it—

“*Discouragement has been given on my part, as far as might be without offence, at a crisis*

* “Memoirs of the Life and Times of the Right Honourable Henry Grattan,” vol. i., p. 321.

† “Life of Grattan,” vol. i., p. 327.

‡ The whole constitution of the volunteer army was republican. The privates elected the officers, and cashiered them, on occasion, for incapacity or misconduct.

when the arm and good will of every individual might have been wanted for the defence of the state.”*

He also speaks with evident uneasiness of the recent formation of additional companies :—

“It has been asserted that this arises from the insinuations which are daily circulated in the public prints, that the idea of their numbers may conduce to the attainment of political advantages to their country.”

The minister fully participates in the apprehensions of the Viceroy, and writes back (June 7) that this idea of the “attainment of political advantages to their country” *must be considered as alarming*; and he recommends—

“The utmost attention to any addition that may be made to the numbers of the companies already raised, and that they be DISCOURAGED by all proper and gentle means.”

To which the Lord Lieutenant rejoins :—

“With respect to the independent corps, nothing has been omitted which, either in my judgment or in those of my advisers, could with propriety and discretion be enforced, to prevent their rise and increase. * * * Upon the whole consideration of this kingdom, the secondary measure of temporising is, in my opinion, called for; and whatever may be the sentiment of government respecting the independent troops, most studiously to avoid giving them any reason to believe that they are either feared or suspected. Expense, fatigue, avocation from business, and subordination, will, by rendering their situation irksome, thin their ranks, and a peace will soon put a period to their existence.”†

That is, “upon the whole consideration of the kingdom,” government would *do nothing*, but hope for the best, and trust to the chapter of accidents, and “perhaps the fire might go out of itself.”

Meanwhile the volunteer army went on increasing in numbers, in efficiency, in military organization, and in distinctness and resoluteness of purpose. The incorporation of detached companies and regiments into regular provincial armies, with close and constant intercommunication, gave them the strength which is in union: the acceptance, by such noblemen as the Duke of Leinster and Lord Charlemont, of the post of commander-in-chief of these provincial armies, raised their self-confidence and self-respect; repeated votes of thanks from parliament gave them the *prestige* of a *quasi* legality; their daily parading and exercising as soldiers, and their daily debating as citizens, gradually perfected their efficiency and zeal in both capacities. They had taken and made good their standing as an established institution.

That volunteer era was a blessed time for Ireland. Despite all her accumulated miseries and wrongs, she was hopeful, happy, and tranquil. As Hardy says,‡ “Ireland, in counting the years of her thralldom, might leave out those of the volunteer institution.” This writer thus describes the effects of volunteerism on national morals and manners :—

“Generosity, frankness, and, above all, a disposition in Irishmen to regard each other with looks of kindness, were then most apparent. It was impossible to contemplate and enjoy the cheerful dawn of unsuspecting intercourse which then diffused its reviving light over this island without an abhorrence of that debasing policy which, when the

* “Life of Grattan,” vol. i., p. 347.

† Ibid., vol. i., p. 358.

‡ “Life of the Earl of Charlemont,” vol. i., p. 383.

sword was sheathed, and the statute-book slumbered, sullenly filled the place of both, turned aside the national character from its natural course, counteracted its best propensities, and, under the denomination of religion, fiercely opposed itself to the celestial precept of Christianity—'Love one another.' The content, the satisfaction that sat in every face, and, I may add, the moral improvement that formed one of the purest sources of that satisfaction, cannot be effaced from the memory. Let those who sneer at the volunteer institution, point out the days, not merely in the Irish, but any history, when decorous manners kept more even pace with the best charities of life, when crime found less countenance, and law more reverence. This state of affairs lasted, it is true, but a short period. It has passed away like a dream." * * *

"If the kingdom was menaced from abroad, it was at home in a state of unexampled security. Private property, private peace, were everywhere watched over by the volunteers with a filial and pious care. * * *

"Though the pursuits of a camp are necessarily incompatible, for the moment, with literary studies, the volunteer institution, so far from being formidable to such studies, eventually contributed to their extension. Almost every man of a liberal education throughout Ireland was now, occasionally at least, in the field, and many gentlemen of literary acquirements devoted no inconsiderable portion of their time to the camp, and such military knowledge as in the situation they could obtain. The different ranks of society became more mingled. Those who were uninformed frequently, often daily, met those who were not so. Liberal intercourse took place, and many were ashamed of continuing ignorant. Reading became, though slowly, a fashion; and what was originally fashion gradually changed into a favoured and pleasing habit. *More books were bought, and continued to be so, after the volunteer institution was formed, than ever before in Ireland.*"

The original object of this volunteer institution was already accomplished by the very act of its formation—the menaced French invasion was effectually prevented. The citizen-soldiers soon found other work to do, in the redress of political wrongs and the attainment of political rights. We have spoken of the national distress of the early years of the American war. In 1778 and 1779 this distress had reached a point beyond which endurance was no longer possible. The complaints of the restricted, embargoed, and pauperised manufacturers of Ireland at length found their way to England; were brought before parliament by the Whig Opposition (May 1779), and would probably have had attention and relief at the hands of the good-natured, well-meaning, expediency statesman then at the head of affairs (Lord North), but that the manufacturing towns of England and Scotland took alarm at the first signs of an abatement of the monopoly which law and the embargoes gave them, and sent up petition on petition, predicting the ruin of their cotton trade and threatening something like rebellion, if the hands of Irish industry were untied. The louder and nearer agitation carried the day. The minister adjourned his good intentions till the next session, on the plea of insufficient information and apprehension of manufacturing insurgency; and, except some trumpery unmeaning generalities in the way of "resolutions," nothing was done—Ireland was left to starve on.

The prorogation of the British parliament in the summer of 1779, without redress of Ireland's commercial grievances, gave a new stimulus and a more definite direction to popular effort. The volunteers grew fast in numbers and in zeal, and the people had recourse to the policy which Dean Swift had recommended half a century before—of retaliating exclusion with exclusion, and monopoly with monopoly. The citizens of Dublin had, a few weeks before (26th of April), met at the Tholsel, and agreed to the following resolutions:—

"That the unjust, illiberal, and impolitic opposition given by many self-interested

people in Great Britain to the proposed encouragement of the trade and commerce of this kingdom, originated in avarice and ingratitude.

"That we will not, directly or indirectly, import or use any goods or wares, the produce or manufacture of Great Britain, which can be produced or manufactured in this kingdom, till an enlightened policy, founded on principles of justice, shall appear to actuate the inhabitants of certain manufacturing towns of Great Britain which have taken so active a part in opposing the regulations proposed in favour of the trade of Ireland, and till they appear to entertain sentiments of respect and affection for their fellow-subjects of this kingdom."

These non-importation resolutions were adopted all over the country, and stringently enforced, to the infinite alarm and perplexity of government, which had never before received half so significant a hint on the subject of "justice to Ireland." Three days after this Tholsel meeting, the Lord Lieutenant writes to inform Lord Weymouth of the untoward aspect of things, adding—

"The Chancellor, Prime Sergeant, and Attorney-General are unanimously of opinion that any notice which government could possibly take, either by causing an information to be filed, or by inducing the privy council to issue a proclamation, expressing that full disapprobation of these measures which they merit, would have no other effect than making this disagreeable disposition worse."*

A month later, the Viceroy has a still more disagreeable communication to make :—

"For some days past, the names of the traders, who appear from the printed returns of the custom-house to have imported any English goods, have been printed in the Dublin newspapers. This is probably calculated for the abominable practice of drawing the indignation of the mob upon individuals."†

The increased energy and density of the pressure from without was apparent on the opening of the next session of the Irish legislature. On the 12th of October, 1779, the Lord Lieutenant met parliament with a speech made up of the usual flummery common-places of regal and viceregal eloquence. But not in common-places was he answered. For our account of what was said and done on this occasion we are indebted to the graphic and vigorous narrative of an eye and ear witness, Sir Jonah Barrington‡ :—

"In the Commons the usual echo and adulatory address was moved by Sir Robert Deane, a person completely devoted to the views of government. A pause succeeded, and an unusual communication was perceivable between several members on the government and the opposition sides of the house. A decided resistance to the usual qualified address now became certain. The secretary, moving irresolutely from place to place, was seen endeavouring to collect the individual opinions of the members, and the law officers of the crown evinced a diffidence never before observable in their deportment; throughout the whole house a new sense of expectation and anxiety was evident.

"At length Mr. HENRY GRATTAN arose, with a somewhat more than usual solemnity. He seemed labouring with his own thoughts, and preparing his mind for a more than ordinary exertion. The address and the language of this extraordinary man were perfectly original. From his first essay in parliament a strong sensation had been excited by the point and eccentricity of his powerful eloquence. His action, his tone, his elocution in public speaking, bore no resemblance to that of any other person. The flights of genius, the arrangements of composition, and the solid strength of connected reasoning were singularly blended in his fiery yet deliberative language. He thought in logic and he spoke in antithesis; his irony and his satire, rapid and epigrammatic, bore down all opposition, and left him no rival in the broad field of eloquent invective. His

* "Life of Grattan," vol. i., p. 346.

† Ibid., p. 353.

‡ "Historic Memoirs of Ireland," vol. i., p. 127 *et seq.*

ungraceful action,' however, and the hesitating tardiness of his first sentences, conveyed no favourable impression to those who listened only to his exordium; but the progress of his brilliant and manly eloquence soon absorbed every idea but that of admiration at the overpowering extent of his intellectual faculties. This was Mr. Henry Grattan of 1779. * * *

"After an oration replete with the most luminous reasoning, the severest censure, pathetic and irresistible eloquence, Mr. Grattan moved an amendment to the address, viz:—'That we beseech your Majesty to believe that it is with the utmost reluctance we are constrained to approach you on the present occasion: but the constant drain to supply absentees, and the unfortunate *prohibition of our trade*, have caused such calamity that the natural support of our country has decayed, and our manufacturers are dying for want; famine stalks hand-in-hand with hopeless wretchedness, and the only means left to support the expiring trade of this miserable part of your Majesty's dominions, is to *open a free export trade*, and let your Irish subjects enjoy their natural birthright.'

"His arguments had been so conclusive, his positions so self-evident, his language so vigorous and determined, his predictions so alarming, and the impression which those combined qualities made upon the house was so deep and so extensive, that the supporters of government, paralysed and passive, seemed almost ready to resign the victory before they had even attempted a resistance. * * *

"The confusion which now appeared on the treasury bench was very remarkable, because very unusual. The secretary (Sir Richard Heron), for the first time, showed a painful mistrust in the steadiness of his followers. He perceived that the spirit of the house was rising into a storm which all the influence of his office would not be able to allay. Direct opposition would be injudicious, if not fatal; palpable evasion would be altogether impracticable, the temporising system was almost worn out, and procrastination seemed to yield no better prospect of a favourable issue. The officers of the government sat sullenly on their benches, awaiting their customary cue from the lips of the minister, but he was too skilful to commit himself to a labyrinth from whence return was so difficult and precarious; and all was silent."

Silence was at last broken by Sir Henry Cavendish, in a hesitating and deprecatory opposition to the amendment: and the debate proceeded with evident timidity and weakness on the part of the government, and rising energy on the opposition side, when a quite unexpected turn was given to the course of things by an event of wonderfully rare occurrence in Irish parliamentary history:—

"Mr. Hussey Burgh * (the Prime Sergeant) at length rose from the treasury bench, with that proud dignity so congenial to his character, and declared that he never would support any government in fraudulently concealing from the King the rights of his people; that the high office which he possessed could hold no competition with his principles and his conscience; and that he should consider the relinquishment of his gown only as a just sacrifice upon the altar of his country; that strong statement, rather than pathetic supplication, was adapted to the crisis; and he proposed to Mr. Grattan to substitute for his amendment the following words—'THAT IT IS NOT BY TEMPORARY EXPEDIENTS, BUT BY A FREE TRADE ALONE, THAT THIS NATION IS NOW TO BE SAVED FROM IMPENDING RUIN.'"

This settled the question. Further resistance was not to be thought of. The character, talents, eloquence, and official standing of the Prime Sergeant bore down all opposition, and won votes even from the Viceroy's family connexions. Not a single negative could the minister procure, and Mr. Burgh's amendment passed *unanimously*. On the result being known, the drums beat to arms; the volunteer regiments assembled from every part of the metropolis, and accompanied their representatives to the Castle, in solemn procession, to make the "strong statement" stronger

* This was the man who, a few weeks later, electrified the house and country with—
"England has sown her laws dragon's teeth, and they have sprung up armed men."

still, and quicken the viceregal deliberations with the pointed argument of fixed bayonets.

A vote of thanks to the volunteers, and a short money-bill (for six months only) were further symptoms of a changed tone of parliamentary feeling, at the commencement of this session of 1779; and the representatives had no ground for complaining of lack of support from their constituents. The virtues and patriotic resolutions of the legislature might count on the best services of a zealous popular and military executive. The Dublin artillery corps of volunteers appeared on parade with their cannon labelled "*Free trade, OR ELSE—*"*

The two powers of Great Britain and Ireland were now fairly committed. The struggle went on, for a while, with the usual characteristics of such conflicts. One partial and illusory concession offered after another—the offer in every instance coming too late to be effectual, even for a momentary conciliation. Great Britain was not yet sufficiently frightened to be quite in earnest, having at present, lost *only one* army in America. But the minister had been so far enlightened by the teacher which teaches fools, as to have gradually acquired the conviction that *something must be done*; and accordingly, he met the British parliament in November, 1779, with a resolution in his hands—

"That it is now expedient to repeal all acts prohibiting the exportation from Ireland of all woollen manufactures whatsoever, or of mixed wool and cotton, or of glass bottles."

Recent events had so far quickened legislative and ministerial activity, and imparted so liberal an allowance of that "information," which had been deficient earlier in the year, that bills founded on this resolution received the royal assent in little more than three weeks.

But it was too late in the day for an "expedient" free trade. What expediency gave, expediency might take away; and free trade itself lost half its worth, and all its security, by coming as a boon from a foreign legislature. Ireland would not have the expedient free trade. A new sort of question began to stir men's minds—rather, an old question turned up again, for instant settlement. *What is this British legislature?* Who gave *it*—a set of people whom none of us ever saw, talking at Westminster—power to open and shut our ports, to bind and loose our industry? The citizen-soldiers and soldier-citizens were soon ready with their answer; which answer was a plain downright NO—expressed in every mood of logic and every figure of rhetoric, by constitutional lawyer's quill, and peaceful agitation of the atmosphere with good gunpowder on volunteer field-days. The doctrine of Molyneux sprang from the ashes of the English hangman's bonfire, and became the faith of all Ireland; the "case

* The following fragment of a song of the day has its value for the historian:—

"Was she not a fool,
When she took off the wool,
To leave us so much of
The leather, the leather?
It ne'er entered her pate,
That a sheep's-skin well beat
Would draw a whole nation
Together, together."

This was a favourite patriotic song and volunteer march.

of Ireland's being bound by acts of parliament in England," was not only "stated," but solved. "An expedient free trade," says a volunteer major (Francis Dobbs), "and the fallacy of it, was soon understood; the plain and simple doctrine that we could not be free, if any power on earth could make laws to bind us, save our King, Lords and Commons, quickly prevailed; this became the sentiment of almost every man." From this time, Irishmen left their free trade to shift for itself, while they looked after their freedom. The *non-importation* agreement was exchanged for a *non-obedience* agreement:—"RESOLVED, THAT WE WILL NOT OBEY any other laws than those enacted by the *King, Lords, and Commons of Ireland*," came now to be the regular stereotyped form, which, at all popular and volunteer gatherings, expressed the "sense of the meeting."

The new popular faith was not long without a voice in the legislature. On the 19th of April, 1780, Grattan prologued the last act of the revolutionary drama, by moving the House of Commons, in one of his greatest speeches, "*That no power on earth, save the King, Lords, and Commons of Ireland, has a right to make laws for Ireland.*" The motion was lost—for a time.

Meanwhile, the people looked not at all to representatives who did not represent them, but only and altogether to themselves. The parliamentary part of the agitation was allowed to subside, while the pressure from without was getting ready. The volunteers went on growing in numbers, in spirit, in military efficiency and political daring and decision—the whole moral and physical force of Ireland was collecting and concentrating itself for one grand crowning effort. All things helped the men who helped themselves. New rumours of French invasion stimulated their exertions, warmed their zeal, and made them more than ever necessary to the government; and with the fogs of November, 1781, came the news that a second British army had surrendered to the rebellious colonists. There was now no need of longer waiting. On the 28th of December, the officers and delegates of the southern battalion of the First Ulster Regiment met at Armagh, to consider the state of the nation, when it was

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED—"That with the utmost concern we behold the little attention paid to the constitutional rights of this kingdom, by the majority of those whose duty it is to establish and preserve the same.

"That, to avert the impending danger from the nation, and to restore the constitution to its original purity, *the most vigorous and effectual methods must be pursued to root out corruption and court influence from the legislative body.*

"That, to open a path towards the attaining of this desirable point, it is absolutely requisite that a meeting be held in the most central town of the province of Ulster, which we conceive to be Dungannon, to which said meeting every volunteer association of the said province is most earnestly requested to send delegates, then and there to deliberate on the present alarming situation of public affairs, and to determine on and publish to their country what may be the result of the said meeting.

"That, as many real and lasting advantages may arise to this kingdom from said intended meeting being held *before the present session of parliament is much farther advanced*, Friday, the 15th day of February next, at ten o'clock in the forenoon, is hereby appointed for said meeting at Dungannon, as aforesaid.

"That, as at said meeting it is highly probable the idea of *forming brigades* will be agitated and considered, the several corps of volunteers who send delegates to said meeting are requested to vest in them a power to associate with some one of such brigades as may be then formed."

The meeting which followed was one of the greatest events in the history of Ireland. The appearance of this Armagh manifesto struck terror into

the heart of Dublin Castle, and everything was done that could be done, in a quiet way, to prevent the meeting, and sow disunion and alarm among its promoters—but in vain. The men that had the conduct of the people's cause were of the "old solemn league and covenant" sort—difficult to cajole, and impossible to frighten.

"The northern counties of Ireland, though not more spirited, are certainly more regular and more intelligent than the other provinces; they took the lead in this celebrated meeting. There are in these counties comparatively but few Roman Catholics, and still fewer of the strictly Protestant religion. The population of Ulster is almost universally Dissenters—a people materially differing in character from the aboriginal inhabitants; particularly sharp-witted, fond of reform, and not hostile to equality; ever examining the constitution by its theory, and seeking a recurrence to original principles; prone to intolerance, without being absolutely intolerant, and disposed to republicanism, without being absolutely Republicans. Of Scottish origin, they partake of many of the peculiarities of that hardy people; penetrating, harsh-minded, persevering, selfish, frugal, by their industry they acquire individual, and by individual, political independence. As brave, though less impetuous than the western and southern Irish, they are more invariably formidable; deep and deliberate in their designs, they are steady and firm in their execution of them; less slaves to their passions than to their interest, their habits are generally temperate, their address quaint, their dialect harsh and disagreeable, their persons hardy and vigorous. With these qualities, the northern Irish convoked delegates from twenty-five thousand soldiers, to collect the sentiments of the Irish people."*

The 15th day of February, 1782, witnessed what Grattan called a "great original transaction," which had no precedent, and needed none. Two hundred armed and equipped delegates, the representatives of a hundred and forty-three corps of Ulster volunteers—men the very first in character and abilities, and (many of them) in rank and fortune, that Ireland had to show; men sedate and wise as brave, all filled with one spirit and united in one will—marched, two and two, into the church of Dungannon, not with "enthusiastic cheering" and "tremendous applause," but in a far more tremendous *silence*; and then and there, after a calm, decorous, and deliberative discussion—

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED—"That a claim of any body of men, other than the King, Lords, and Commons of Ireland, to make laws to bind this kingdom, is *unconstitutional, illegal, and a GRIEVANCE*."

"That the power exercised by the privy councils of both kingdoms, under the pretence of the law of Poyning's, is *unconstitutional and a GRIEVANCE*."

"That the ports of this country are, by right, open to all foreign countries not at war with the King, and that any burdens thereupon, or obstruction thereto, save only by the parliament of Ireland, are *unconstitutional, illegal, and a GRIEVANCE*."

They also expressed their "satisfaction as men, as Irishmen, as Christians, and as Protestants," at a certain recent relaxation of the Catholic penal code, as a "measure fraught with the happiest consequence to the union and prosperity of the inhabitants of Ireland;" and they finished with appointing a committee of their body to sit in Dublin, and communicate with the volunteer associations of the other provinces of Ireland.

This was the famous DUNGANNON CONVENTION. Its effect was electric. Meetings were called in every county, city, town, and village in Ireland, and the Dungannon resolutions were echoed from east, west, north, and south. In these Dungannon resolutions the whole moral and physical force of Ireland was united, with volition one and indivisible.

* Barrington's "Historic Memoirs," vol. i., p. 225.

It was now time not only that "something," but that everything should be done, if England did not mean to lose Ireland altogether, by a three-days', or a three-hours' revolution. In less than six weeks from the Dungannon Convention, the North ministry went out, the Whigs came in, under the Marquis of Rockingham and Mr. Fox,—and the 14th of April saw the entry into Dublin of a Whig Lord Lieutenant, the Duke of Portland, as King's Messenger of justice to Ireland. The British parliament had received, five days before, a royal message to the following effect:—

"GEORGE R.

"His Majesty, being concerned to find that discontents and jealousies are prevailing among his loyal subjects in Ireland, upon matters of great weight and importance, earnestly recommends to this house to take the same into their most serious consideration, in order to such a *final adjustment* as may give mutual satisfaction to both kingdoms."

What this final adjustment was to be, the new Whig ministry, with the usual easy, moderate well-meaningness of their party, did not as yet exactly know. Only they had "no other wish" than what might be for the "real advantage of both countries." It curiously shows how little, at that time of day, British statesmen thought of Ireland, or troubled their heads about Irish policy, that on the 4th of this month of April, Mr. Fox could write to Lord Charlemont—

"With regard to the particular points between the two countries, *I am really not yet master of them sufficiently to discuss them*; but I can say in general, that the new ministry have no other wish than to settle them in the way that may be most for the real advantage of both countries, whose interests cannot be distinct."*

The truth is, these excellent, upright, and thoroughly well-intentioned statesmen knew, of the condition and temper of Ireland, precisely *nothing*. They begged hard for an adjournment of the Irish parliament, to give them time to learn. The good Marquis of Rockingham, writing to his old and esteemed friend the good Earl of Charlemont—

"Should hope that an adjournment of the House of Commons in Ireland, for a fortnight, or three weeks, in order to give the Duke of Portland the opportunity of inquiring into the opinions of your lordship and of the gentlemen of the first weight and consequence, will be readily assented to."†

But the ready assent was not forthcoming. Not ready assent, but categorical imperative demand, was the temper of the time. No adjournment could they get, for one week, or one day; instant concession in full of all demands, or instant revolution—they had no other alternative. Mr. Grattan had given notice of an immediate motion for a Declaration of Rights; had got a call of the House for the 16th of April, ordering all the members to attend, "as they tendered the rights of the Irish Parliament," and neither Mr. Grattan nor the House of Commons, least of all the armed Irish people at their back—had any notion of waiting while the Duke of Portland inquired into the "opinions of gentlemen of the first weight and consequence."

The sixteenth day of April arrived, and found all Ireland—her government excepted—united as one man. From early morning, Dublin streets

* Hardy's "Life of the Earl of Charlemont," vol. ii., p. 13.

† *Ibid.*, p. 6.

were lined with volunteer troops under arms, and thronged with peaceful, tranquil myriads—tranquil with resolute, compressed volition—who let their very enemies pass through their ranks to vote away their liberties, without a rude or angry word. What the government would do, no living man knew—government itself knew not. Grattan had been backwards and forwards at the Castle again and again during the previous forty-eight hours, with the draft of his Declaration of Rights, which, it seems, was somewhat too strong in substance and too peremptory in form for his Grace the Viceroy's liking. The duke could not say he would support it, and would not say he would oppose it; he could only recommend moderation, and suggest modification, and put a good face on the matter, and hope for the best.

Four o'clock came—a full house, a thronged auditory of rank and beauty, palpitating through every heart's fibre with anxious, uncertain wonderment what the hours would bring.

"For a short time," says Sir Jonah Barrington,* "a profound silence ensued. It was expected that Mr. Grattan would immediately rise—when the wisdom and discretion of the government gave a turn to the proceedings. Mr. Hely Hutchinson rose. He said that his Excellency the Lord Lieutenant had ordered him to deliver a message from the King, importing that his Majesty, 'being concerned to find that discontents and jealousies were prevailing among his loyal subjects of Ireland upon matters of great weight and importance, recommended to the House to take the same into their most serious consideration, in order to effect such a final adjustment as might give satisfaction to both kingdoms.' And Mr. Hutchinson accompanied this message with a statement of his own views on the subject, and his determination to support a declaration of Irish rights and constitutional independence. * * * Mr. Hutchinson, however, observed in his speech, that he was not officially authorised to say more than simply to deliver the message. He was therefore silent as to all details, and pledged the government to none; the parliament would act upon the message as to themselves might seem advisable. * * *

"Notwithstanding this official communication, the government members were still greatly perplexed how to act. Mr. Grattan's intended declaration of independence was too strong, decisive and prompt, to be relished as the measure of any government. It could neither be wholly resisted nor generally approved of by the Viceroy. And it was generally believed *that the members of the government went to parliament that day without any decided plan or system*, but determined to regulate their own individual conduct by the circumstances which might occur.

"A solemn pause ensued. Mr. Grattan remained silent; when Mr. George Ponsonby rose, and, after eulogising the King, the British ministry, and the Irish government, simply proposed an humble address in reply, 'thanking the King for his goodness and condescension, and assuring his Majesty that his faithful Commons would immediately proceed upon the great objects he had recommended to their consideration.' "

But no consideration whatever was necessary; the "great objects" had been considered and determined two months before. Nothing was now needed—nothing was now possible—but to transfer the Dungannon Resolutions to the Commons' Journals.

At length Mr. Grattan arose, and spoke a speech worthy of Ireland and of himself—a speech rising, in its assured victoriousness of tone, to the very top of the high occasion, and concluded with moving an address to the Crown—

"To assure his Majesty that his subjects of Ireland are a FREE PEOPLE, and that there is no body of men competent to make laws to bind this nation, EXCEPT THE KING, LORDS, AND COMMONS OF IRELAND; nor any parliament which hath any authority or power of any sort whatsoever in this country, SAVE ONLY THE PARLIAMENT OF IRELAND."

* "Historic Memoirs," vol. i., p. 299 *et seq.*

The effect was instantaneous and decisive. When the house had recovered its self-possession, another pause ensued, but not a pause of doubt—for doubt there was none left; the battle was over, and the victory won. Nothing remained to be known, except in what manner and form, and though what organ the government would give in its adhesion to the popular will.

Mr. George Ponsonby was the member to whom this task was delegated. He announced the Viceroy's acquiescence, with the best grace that circumstances allowed; and, after a few words more of hearty congratulation from some members, and vigorous recantation of former votes from others—

"All further debate ceased. The Speaker put the question on Mr. Grattan's amendment, a unanimous 'AYE' burst from every quarter of the house. He repeated the question—the applause was redoubled; a moment of tumultuous exultation followed, and, after centuries of oppression, Ireland at length declared herself AN INDEPENDENT NATION."

On the 4th of May, parliament adjourned for three weeks, to await the answer of the British ministry and legislature. Ireland remained the while, high of heart and hope, yet sedate and watchful. Everything had been promised, but every thing was still to be performed. The Volunteers were at their post, more active and vigilant than ever; exercising and reviewing went on daily, as vigorously as though a French fleet were cruising in the Channel; the artillery corps kept their powder dry and tried their guns every morning in the Phoenix Park; camp equipage was got ready for service at an hour's notice; and the rising sun of the 27th of May (to which day the parliament stood adjourned) saw the whole volunteer force of the metropolis under arms—either to receive the news of Great Britain's unqualified surrender, or else to take the field without more words. Happily for Great Britain, the Lord Lieutenant was empowered to meet parliament that afternoon, with expressions of his "utmost satisfaction" at being enabled to acquaint them that, "by the magnanimity of the King, and the wisdom of the parliament of Great Britain, immediate attention had been paid to their representation, and that the British legislature had concurred in a resolution to remove the causes of their discontents and jealousies, and were united in a desire to gratify every wish expressed in their late addresses to the throne;" and that "these benevolent intentions of his Majesty, and the willingness of his parliament of Great Britain to second his gracious purposes, were *unaccompanied by any stipulation or condition whatever.*"

Ten days previously, the two houses of the British parliament had concurred, with but one solitary exception to their unanimity, in a resolution for the immediate *repeal of the Act of the Sixth of George I.*, declaratory of the right of Great Britain to legislate for Ireland.

What would have been the consequence of the British parliament taking a different course may be sufficiently inferred from a short note of Grattan's to his friend Mr. Day, written a fortnight before:—

"May 11, 1782.
"MY DEAR DAY—I have only time to say that if nothing is concluded before our meeting, the 26th, *we must proceed as if refused*; protraction is inadmissible. Mention this, as it is of the last consequence.

"Yours,
"HENRY GRATTAN."

Supposing that they had "proceeded as if refused," Great Britain had at this moment but five thousand disposable troops, to meet a hundred thousand volunteers, and two hundred pieces of artillery.

In answer to the Lord Lieutenant's most gracious speech of the 27th, Mr. Grattan, in the fulness of his heart, moved an equally gracious address, accepting England's concession of the repeal question as full and satisfactory; and assuring his Majesty that—

"No constitutional question between the two nations will any longer exist, which can interrupt their harmony; that Great Britain, as she has approved of our firmness, so may she rely on our affection; and that we remember and do repeat our determination to stand or fall with the British nation."

The loyal and grateful address did not, strange to say, pass unanimously. There were two perverse, hard-headed lawyers in the house—Sir Samuel Bradstreet and Mr. David Walshe—with obstinate wills of their own, who, in the midst of the general enthusiasm, presumed to doubt the non-existence of any remaining "constitutional question between the two nations which might interrupt their harmony," and carried their doubts to the ungracious length of dividing the house against those particular words. But what was a minority of two, among so many rejoicing and jubilant patriots? The address was triumphantly carried, and the house adjourned amid the acclamations of a loyal, trusting, and believing people.

This eventful repeal session closed, on the 27th of July, with an eloquent Lord Lieutenant's speech, congratulatory, commendatory, and affectionately hortatory. It perorates thus:—

"What I would most earnestly press upon you, as that upon which your domestic peace and happiness, and the prosperity of the empire at this moment most immediately depend, is to cultivate and diffuse those sentiments of affection and confidence which are now happily restored between the two kingdoms. Convince the people in your several districts, as you are yourselves convinced, that every cause of past jealousies and discontents is finally removed; that both countries have pledged their good faith to each other, and that their best security will be an inviolable adherence to that compact; that the implicit reliance which Great Britain has reposed on the honour, generosity, and candour of Ireland, engages your national character to a return of sentiments equally liberal and enlarged. Convince them that the two kingdoms are now one; indissolubly connected in unity of constitution and unity of interests; that the danger and security, the prosperity and calamity, of the one must equally affect the other—that they stand or fall together."

Eighteen years from that day, this Duke of Portland was found speaking and voting for another sort of "unity" between the two kingdoms.

It was a pleasant faith, while it lasted, that "every cause of past jealousies and discontents was finally removed." Yet was there not something, after all, in what shrewd Lord Camden said, on seeing one of those grand Belfast Volunteer Reviews?—"Keep it up, keep it up; for, rely on it, ENGLAND WILL NEVER FORGIVE YOU."

CHAPTER IV.

THE LEGISLATIVE INDEPENDENCE—LAWYERS' DOUBTS CONTINUED—
 REPEAL AND RENUNCIATION—REFORM AGITATION—NATIONAL CON-
 VENTION OF 1783—COMMERCIAL PROPOSITIONS—THE CREEPING,
 INCIPIENT UNION—THE REGENCY QUESTION—THE DISAPPOINTMENT.

IN the summer of 1782, the state of Ireland seemed to promise a glorious future of freedom, virtue, and prosperity. Rich in all the raw material of national power and greatness; lightly taxed, and but moderately indebted; her industry liberated from the shackles, and her self-respect secured from the insult of foreign legislation; her parliament patriotic, and her people united; Catholic and Protestant for a while forgetting, the one his servitude and the other his ascendancy, in the amity of a common citizenship; her volunteer army superseding all other army, doing the work at once of military and police, keeping the peace at home, and averting war from abroad—holding France in check, and extorting concession from England; emancipated from the control of the British legislature, while still sharing the protection of the British crown, Independent Ireland seemed about to take her place in the great family of European nations, under circumstances every way favourable to a vigorous and healthy national life. By what wretched fatality it was that all these fair hopes were blighted, we are now to show. We have seen Ireland and her Volunteers in the hour of their great success; we are now to witness the yet greater disappointment by which that success was promptly followed; from which we shall pass on, in the next chapter, to those renewed efforts of baffled and defeated patriotism which ultimately produced the Rebellion of 1798.

Those "lawyers' doubts" which we mentioned in the last chapter were not long confined to the lawyers—they made rapid progress among the people, and took strong hold of the popular mind. The national rejoicings and thanksgivings at the "final adjustment" of May, 1782, were not well over before it began to be more than suspected that the final adjustment was no adjustment at all; that the finality was a mere and simple cheat, with which the craft of a foreign cabinet and the treachery of a domestic legislature had conspired to abuse the confidence of a too credulous people. Great Britain had repealed the act of 6 George I., declaratory of her right to make laws for Ireland. *But what of that?* said the lawyers; as that act was not enacting, but only declaratory—declaratory of an assumed pre-existing state of the law and constitution as regarded the relations of the two countries—to repeal it, to withdraw the declaration, was merely bringing matters back to where they were at the time the declaration was first made; and it would always remain competent to Great Britain to *renew the declaration*. The operation of the Sixth of George I. was not to alter the law, but only to declare it; therefore the repeal of the Sixth of George I. did not alter the law, but only left it undeclared. Great Britain had not disclaimed her usurped and assumed right of legislating for Ireland; she had only, for convenience' sake, scored out from her statute-book a particular form of words asserting the right, leaving it open to her to re-assert the right, at such time and in such form as she might think proper. So that Ireland had gained simply nothing by this

repeal; it only put the question back to where it stood in the fifth year of the reign of George I. Great Britain ought to have disclaimed the alleged right to legislate for Ireland, to have renounced it altogether as a usurpation, null and void *ab initio*.*

These legal doubts were the occasion of a popular and party schism, which was of the worst possible consequence to the peace and freedom of Ireland, which marred the great victory of 1782, weakened, by dividing, the power of the people and their leaders, strengthened the hands of their oppressors, foreign and domestic, and left uncured and incurable those discontentments and causes of discontent which finally exploded in the Rebellion of 1798. This question of *repeal* or *renunciation* completely spoiled the first year of Ireland's independence. It divided the Volunteers,† it divided the people, it divided the people's best friends in parliament; it brought to a head the mischievous animosity between Flood and Grattan—the very men of all others, on whose union and mutual co-operation the best interests of Ireland then depended; it gave the old discomfited court faction a little breathing time for self-recovery—it did mischief, and only mischief. A more barren and unprofitable controversy than this of repeal and renunciation never was. It made a curious case in legal and constitutional metaphysics, but was utterly void of practical utility. No doubt, Flood and the people were right in holding simple repeal an inadequate guarantee for Irish independence, but Grattan and the parliament were right too, in holding that, if repeal would not do, nothing would do. The truth is, the independence of Ireland rested not on any act of repeal, or of renunciation either, but on her own union and strength; and whatever marred that union, and impaired that strength, went to the undoing of all that had been done by the struggle of the preceding four years. The futility of the controversy was sufficiently apparent when, in the session of 1783, in consequence of some new grounds of dissatisfaction having accidentally arisen to re-open the legal question between the countries, Great Britain did, almost without a debate, pass the much-desired renunciatory act (23 George III., c. 28), by which it was declared and enacted that “the right claimed by the people of Ireland to be bound only by laws enacted by his Majesty and the parliament of that kingdom, in all cases whatsoever, should be, and was thereby declared to be established and ascertained for ever, and should at no time thereafter be questioned or questionable.” Even then Ireland was not satisfied. The simple-repeal party were mortified at the triumph of their opponents, whose objections to the original arrangement were thus constructively allowed and confirmed by the British legislature; and the renunciation party thought that the new act did not go far enough, and made much work for themselves in picking holes in the very instrument that seemed designed for the perpetual and irrevocable confirmation of their liberties.

In truth, nothing could have satisfied any reflecting and moderately sceptical Irishman, that the liberty of his country was assured by what

* See the arguments of the Recorder, Sir Samuel Bradstreet, and Mr. David Walshe, in the debate of May, 1782. Mr. Flood, likewise, was one of the objectors.

† On the 3rd of August, 1782, the Belfast volunteer delegates debated for eleven hours on a clause in their address to their reviewing general, Lord Charlemont, expressive of “full satisfaction” at the repeal act. A majority of two expunged the clause.

British ministers or British parliaments might say or do. The case, from the very nature of it, did not allow of such satisfaction being either given or received. The adjustment of May, 1782, had been declared "final." The parliament in Dublin had voted that "no constitutional question between the two nations would any longer exist which could interrupt their harmony," and had responded with acclamations to the viceregal assurance, that "every cause of jealousies and discontents was finally removed." It was pleasant to think that—but, alas! the thing could not be. The repeal act of 1782 was itself a most potent cause of jealousies and discontents; and not seven years elapsed without producing *two* constitutional questions of first-rate magnitude and importance, which essentially interrupted the harmony of the countries, and indicated an anomaly in their relations, only to be solved either by separation or incorporate union. Finality there could not be in an arrangement which the essentially and habitually weaker of two neighbouring and closely connected countries had extorted by menace, under favour of a most singular combination of circumstances, of brief duration and almost impossible recurrence, from the essentially and habitually stronger. The crisis would pass away; the essential and habitual would prevail over the casual and accidental; and the first-rate power would regain, under some new name or form, its old ascendancy over the second-rate power. "*Keep it up, keep it up; for, rely on it, England will never forgive you.*"—there was more of the practical philosophy of politics in this, than in whole libraries of disquisition on the respective merits of renunciation and repeal. As long as Ireland could and would "keep it up"—keep up that spirit and power of armed union which had won her independence—so long her independence was safe; and as soon as Ireland ceased to keep it up, her independence was gone. From the time that the two countries began to return to their old and habitual mutual relations of superiority and inferiority—from that hour would England begin gradually to regain that which she had suddenly lost.

The lawyers were quite right in their doubts, though not exactly on lawyer grounds. "Discontents and jealousies" in abundance did remain. No declarations, no repeal or renunciation acts, nor anything else that a British ministry or parliament might say or do, could ever make the independence complete and reciprocal. Great Britain, the stronger of the two, had been humbled by Ireland, the weaker; and Great Britain could not but be jealous, and Ireland suspicious. We may say, in general, that the adjustment of 1782 never could be regarded by any British statesman as final; and there is plenty of evidence, in particular, to show that it was not so regarded by the statesmen by whom it was made. Thus, during the month of June in that year, we find the Marquis of Rockingham writing to Lord Charlemont—

"There are matters which may want adjustment in the new state in which England and Ireland now stand. I heartily wish that no time was lost on either side, in accelerating the adjustment of any such matters which might hereafter cause any disputes or misunderstandings, and that this happy moment of friendship, and cordiality, and confidence between the countries was made use of to form and arrange plans of mutual and reciprocal support."

On which Lord Charlemont, not a little perplexed and annoyed at the

prospect of more "adjustment" being needed, writes back to the Marquis—

"The paragraph in your lordship's letter, where you mention that in the new state in which England and Ireland now stand there are matters which may want adjustment, *I do not entirely comprehend.* That all future disputes or misunderstandings should be obviated, is undoubtedly a principle of which no man can disapprove; but till your lordship shall be pleased particularly to specify the means by which this great object may be attained, it is impossible for me to form any judgment or to give any opinion."*

The value of the vice-regal and parliamentary assurance that "no constitutional question between the two countries would any longer exist which could interrupt their harmony," may be further tested by a reference to the correspondence of the statesmen by whom the "final adjustment" was devised and effected. On the 6th of June, 1782—just ten days after the Irish Commons had voted the non-existence of any such outstanding constitutional question—the Duke of Portland writes thus to Lord Shelburne:—

"I have the best reason to hope that I shall soon be enabled to transmit to you the sketch or outlines of an act of parliament to be adopted by the legislatures of the respective kingdoms, by which *the superintending power and supremacy of Great Britain in all matters of state and general commerce* will be virtually and effectually acknowledged; and that *Ireland will adopt every such regulation as may be judged necessary by Great Britain* for the better ordering and securing her trade and commerce with foreign nations or her own colonies and dependencies. I am flattered with the most positive assurances from * * * and * * * of their support in carrying such a bill through both houses of parliament, and I think it most advisable to bring it to perfection at the present moment."

That is to say "he had every reason to hope" that Ireland would surrender, at that present moment, the very pith and marrow of the independence which she had so recently and so laboriously won. Lord Shelburne, on the 9th of the same month, writes, much delighted, in reply,—

"I have lived in the most anxious expectation of some such measure offering itself. * * * *Let the two kingdoms be one—which can only be by Ireland now acknowledging the superintending power and supremacy to be where nature has placed it, in precise and unambiguous terms.* I am sure I need not inculcate on your Grace the importance of words in an act which must decide on the happiness of ages, particularly in what regards contribution and trade, subjects most likely to come into frequent question."

The agreeable and flattering prospect was, however, soon clouded over. On the 22nd, the Duke writes back to Lord Shelburne:—

"The disappointment and mortification I suffer, by the unexpected change in those dispositions which had authorised me to entertain the hopes I have, perhaps too sanguinely, expressed in my letter of the 6th instant, must not prevent me from acquainting you that for the present those expectations must be given up. * * * By the accounts of the events of these three or four days, and by the timidity and jealousy of the first people in this country, it is clear that any injudicious or offensive measures may be prevented; but that any attempt to conciliate the mind of this nation to any such measure, as I intimated the hope of, would at this moment be delusive and impossible."†

Here were the first signs of the *creeping, incipient Union*, as Grattan afterwards called it in the bitterness of his heart, when he found his mis-

* Hardy's 'Life of the Earl of Charlemont,' vol. ii., pp. 37—42.

† See Plowden's "Historical Review," vol. i., p. 611, Note.

take. The "final adjustment" of May was discovered, in June, to stand in need of a re-adjustment.

On the whole, never was a nation more mistaken than Ireland, in thinking that Great Britain, by repealing this or renouncing that, made her independent: only by a war of separation, sharp and bloody as that which severed the American colonies from the mother country, could such independence ever be realised. Never had a people less reason to be elated,—never did a people risk more by over-confidence and political credulity,—never had a people more need of union, activity and vigilance, than the Irish in 1782. They had made an immense effort, and gained an immense victory; but it was a victory full of peril, and could only be retained by the continuous, unsleeping exertion of the energies by which it had been won. Meanwhile, Ireland, most unhappily for her peace and freedom, was not in a condition in which continued union and strength were possible.

No sooner had the victory of 1782 been obtained, than it began to be but too plain that it was no victory for the people, and that not by the people would its fruits be gathered. It was as complete a case of the *sic vos non vobis* as history has anywhere to show. The armed Irish people, with an energy and wisdom which have never been surpassed and rarely approached, had effected a peaceful revolution—had achieved the independence of their legislature. But liberty, justice, good government, wise laws honestly administered—these were further off from them than ever, unless they had energy and wisdom to make one effort more. The Irish parliament was now independent of the British parliament. But what if the Irish parliament were likewise *independent of the Irish people*?* What was to be expected then, but that a new domestic tyranny should be substituted for the old foreign tyranny, and the last state of Ireland be worse than her first? Parliamentary independence, without parliamentary reform, was only an exchange of one mode of oppression and misgovernment for another—perhaps a worse. The work, it was plain, was as yet but half done. Accordingly, that cry for parliamentary reform which the distresses and disgraces of the American war had already roused in England, and which, with the son of Chatham for its organ, seemed advancing to a speedy and sure triumph, soon found a response in Ireland; and the alert and awakened "faculty of the Irish nation was braced up" once more to complete "the act of her own deliverance," by purifying and popularising the constitution of her emancipated parliament. On the 1st of July,

* The most moderate and mitigated account we have met with of the state of the Irish representation at that time is given by Plowden:—

"The House of Commons consisted of 300 members; 64 of them were sent by the counties, the remainder by cities and boroughs. The 64 from counties were in some measure in the option of the people; and about as many more from the cities and boroughs might, by extraordinary exertions of the people, be freely chosen. Upon that calculation the people, by possibility, might send 128 members to parliament. The other boroughs, which were close or snug, sent the remainder, 172. These were the property of some few lords and commoners; and being the majority, the House of Commons consequently, as it stood, was the representative of an aristocracy."—"Historical Review," vol. ii., p. 32.

The "people," in the above calculation, means the *Protestant section of the people*. The Irish Catholic people had no part nor lot in the matter.

1783, a meeting of delegates from forty-five companies of Volunteers of the province of Ulster—

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY—"That a general meeting of the Volunteer delegates of the province of Ulster, on the subject of *a more equal representation of the people in parliament*, is hereby earnestly entreated to be held at Dungannon on Monday, the 8th of September next."

A committee was appointed, to correspond with the Volunteer armies of the other provinces, and make arrangements for a general and consensual movement. A vigorous and active correspondence with the English reform associations was also carried on. The committee, in their report—

"Trust that the spirit of firmness and integrity, which has already restored this ancient kingdom to her rank in the nations, will crown the 8th of September, 1783, as a day which is to form the groundwork of *internal emancipation* on a basis, as great as that on which our rights, as an independent nation, have been with such rapid success already established."

The Ulster Volunteer Association met accordingly at Dungannon, on the 8th of September, and arranged a plan of united and continuous national agitation. Delegates were present from two hundred and seventy-two companies, and it was—

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY—"That a committee of five persons from each county be now chosen, by ballot, to represent this province in a GRAND NATIONAL CONVENTION, to be held at noon, in the Royal Exchange of Dublin, on the 10th day of November next; to which, we trust, each of the other provinces will send delegates, to *digest and publish a plan of parliamentary reform, to pursue such measures as may appear to them most likely to render it effectual*, to adjourn from time to time, and convene provincial meetings if found necessary."

They closed their proceedings with an address to the Volunteer armies of the other provinces, of which the most significant passage runs thus:—

"Through her four provincial assemblies, let Ireland's temperate declarations flow to one common centre, and there, matured into an extensive plan of reform, be produced as *the solemn act of the Volunteer army of Ireland*—as a demand of rights, robbed of which the unanimated forms of a free government would be a curse, and existence itself cease to be a blessing.

All which reads excellently well, and seems to give fair promise of a good and great result. But at this Dungannon meeting one mistake was made, of fatal consequence. Our Volunteers, unanimous on most points, were divided on *one*. Determined to be free, they had not made up their minds to be just; their "demand of rights" was not inconsistent with the continued infliction of the grossest wrongs on five-sixths of their countrymen; their notion of "an extensive plan of reform" did not extend to the reform of the worst grievance of all—the political slavery of the Catholic millions. At this Dungannon meeting, the old Protestant-ascendancy spirit spoke out again: it was proposed that the elective franchise should be given to Catholics, and, through the influence of Lord Charlemont and his friends, REJECTED. Even yet, the existence of the Irish Catholic people was not recognised.

With this taint upon them, of bigotry, exclusiveness, tyranny, and injustice prepenne, the Volunteer delegates met at Dublin, on the 10th of November, 1783, in a GRAND NATIONAL CONVENTION—a parliament

freely chosen by the people (i.e., by the Protestant section of the people) for the purification and reform of the other parliament of aristocratic, ministerial, and corporation nominees. The assembly comprised much of the very best that Ireland could furnish of talent, character, eloquence, and patriotism; some men of high rank, many of large fortune, several of extensive political and parliamentary influence.* The Royal Exchange being found too small for them, they immediately adjourned in grand procession to the Rotunda, the finest room in Ireland, situated within view of the Commons' House of Parliament, which was then sitting. For what follows, we again avail ourselves of the aid of that admirable historic painter, Sir Jonah Barrington,† who, at the head of the cavalry corps of "Cullenagh Rangers," attended the delegates on the occasion as a guard of honour. In his delightful pages the whole of that joyous scene lives again, bright and fresh as a thing of to-day:—

"The firing of cannon announced the first movement of the delegates from the Royal Exchange to the Rotunda. A troop of cavalry, commanded by Colonel Edwards, commenced the procession; the Liberty Brigade of artillery, commanded by Napper Tandy, with a band, succeeded; a company of the Barristers' grenadiers, headed by Colonel Pedder, with a national standard of Ireland borne by a captain of grenadiers, and surrounded by the finest men they could select, came after, their muskets slung, and bright battle-axes borne on their shoulders; a battalion of infantry, with a band, followed; and then the delegates, two and two, with side-arms, and in their respective uniforms; broad green ribands were worn across their shoulders. The Protestant chaplains of the different regiments, in their cassocks, marched each with his respective corps, giving solemnity to the occasion, and as if invoking the blessing of Heaven on their efforts, which had a wonderful effect on the surrounding multitude. Several standards and colours were borne by the different corps of horse and foot; and another brigade of artillery, commanded by Counsellor Calbeck, with labels on the cannons' mouths,‡ was escorted by the Barristers' Corps, in scarlet and gold—the motto on their buttons being '*vox populi suprema lex est.*' The procession in itself was interesting in the extreme, but the surrounding scene was still more affecting. Their line of march, from the Exchange to the Rotunda, was through the most spacious streets and quays of the city open on both sides to the river. An immense body of spectators crowding every window and housetop would be but an ordinary occurrence, and might be seen and described without novelty or interest; but on this occasion every countenance expressed zeal, every eye expressed solicitude, every action proclaimed triumph; green ribands and handkerchiefs were waved from every window by the enthusiasm of its fair occupants, the crowds seemed to move on the house-tops; ribands were flung upon the delegates as they passed. Yet it was not a loud or boisterous, but a firm and awful enthusiasm. It was not the effervescence of a heated crowd, it was not the fiery ebullition of a glowing people, it was not sedition, it was liberty that inspired them: the heart bounded, though the tongue was motionless." * * *

"The artillery had scarcely announced the entry of the delegates into the Rotunda, when that silent respect which had pervaded the entire population during the procession yielded to more lively feelings. No longer could the people restrain their joy. At first a low murmur seemed to proceed from different quarters, which, soon increasing in its fervour, at length burst into a universal cheer of triumph, like distant thunder gradually rolling on, till one great and continued peal bursts upon the senses. The loud and incessant cheering of the people soon reverberated from street to street, contributing their whole powers of acclamation to glorify an assembly which they had vainly conceived must be omnipotent; it was an acclamation long, sincere, and unanimous, and occa-

* In the list of delegates we note two names, in particular, which may interest the reader—the Right Honourable Colonel ROBERT STEWART, afterwards *Lord Castlereagh*, and RICHARD LOVELL EDGEWORTH.

† "Historic Memoirs," vol. ii., p. 175 *et seq.*

‡ The motto was—"Oh! Lord, open thou our lips, and our mouths shall show forth thy praise!"

sionally died away only to be renewed with redoubled energy. The vivid interest excited by this extraordinary and affecting scene can never be conceived save by those who were present and participated in its feelings, nor can time or age obliterate it from the memory."

This first day of the Grand National Convention ended (all business being adjourned till the morrow) with cheers, cannon, musketry and music, a general illumination, and universal jubilee. The government were astounded, the parliament enraged, and the privy council perplexed and divided.

The very first act of the convention, next morning, was a mistake. They elected for their president Lord Charlemont, a virtuous and patriotic Whig nobleman, but a man over-cautious and moderate for a time and a work which needed energy first, and caution and moderation afterwards; a man whose popular principles were dashed with aristocratic sympathies, whose anti-Catholic prejudices had already done some mischief, and were in the way to do much more; a man whose very virtues bordered on the worst weaknesses which, at such a time, could spoil the people's work and ruin the people's cause, and who had only been induced to take part in the convention at all, by the hope of being able to *put on the drag-chain* to the chariot-wheels of reform. When the Castle and the parliament heard that good Lord Charlemont was to be president, they breathed more freely, and took courage.

The convention sat for upwards of three weeks, debating and discussing, in regular parliamentary form, the various plans that were submitted to them for remodelling and popularising the representation; the Lord Lieutenant and privy council, meanwhile, holding their sittings midway between the two parliaments, and receiving alternate reports of the proceedings of each. At last, after infinite debate, the Reform Bill was ready. The eloquence, talent, and parliamentary reputation of Flood had secured to him the lead and practical dictatorship of the assembly; numberless schemes of reform had been discussed and rejected—the liberal and eccentric Bishop of Derry's "wild" notion of giving the franchise to Catholics had been scouted by large majorities—and Mr. Flood's bill, having been duly sifted and improved upon by two committees, was declared to be the thing; and on the afternoon of Saturday, the 29th of November, it was ordered by the convention that he, Mr. Flood, accompanied by such members of parliament as were also members of convention, should immediately go down to the House of Commons, and move for leave to bring in a bill the exact fac-simile of the one approved by the convention. The convention declared their sittings permanent until the fate of the bill should be decided.

"Parliament," says Hardy, "now became the theatre of popular exertion. Whoever was present in the House of Commons on the night of the 29th of November, 1783, cannot easily forget what passed there. I do not use any disproportionate language when I say that the scene was almost terrific. Several of the minority and all the delegates who had come from the convention were in uniforms, and bore the aspect of stern hostility. On the other hand, the administration, being supported on this occasion by many independent gentlemen, and having at their head very able men, such as Mr. Yelverton and Mr. Daly, presented a body of strength not always seen in the ministerial ranks, looked defiance to their opponents, and indeed seemed almost unassailable. They stood certainly on most advantageous ground, and that ground given to them by their adversaries. Mr. Flood, flushed with his recent triumphs in another place, and enjoying

the lofty situation which his abilities always placed him in, fearlessly led on the attack. Mr. Yelverton answered him with great animation, great strength of argument, and concluded with a generous, dignified appeal to the Volunteers, whom he applauded for every part of their conduct, the present alone excepted. Some speeches followed in a similar tone, but the minds of men soon became too heated to permit any regular debate whatever. It was uproar, it was clamour, violent menace, and furious recrimination ! If ever a popular assembly wore the appearance of a wild and tumultuous ocean, it was on this occasion ; at certain, and those were very short, intervals there was something like a calm, when the dignity of parliament, the necessity of supporting the constitution, and danger of any military assembly, were feelingly and justly expatiated on. The sad state of the representation was, with equal truth, depicted on the other side. A denial of Volunteer interference, and the necessity of amending the representation, whether Volunteers existed or not, was, in the first instance, made with very imperfect sincerity, and in the latter with genuine candour. To this again succeeded tumult and confusion, mingled with the sad and angry voices of many who, allied to boroughs, railed at the Volunteers like slaves, not gentlemen, and pretended to uphold the constitution, whilst they were, in truth, appalled at the light that now began, as their terror suggested, to pervade their ancient and ambiguous property. But the imprudence of the Volunteers was of more service to such men than all their array of servile hostility ; on that night, at least, it proved their best safeguard, and placed them not within the shadowy, uncertain confines of a depopulated borough, where they could find no safety, but under the walls of the constitution itself. The tempest—for towards morning debate there was almost none—at last ceased ; the question was put, and carried of course in favour of government. This was followed, and wisely too, by a resolution declaratory of the fixed determination of the house to maintain its privileges and just rights *against any encroachments whatever : and that it was then indispensably necessary to make such a declaration.*"*

This was obviously a vote of censure and defiance aimed at the Volunteers and their convention. It was now plain that the latter had gone too far and too fast, unless they were prepared, without division or delay, to go much further. The convention had now no alternative except resistance or dissolution. They chose the weaker and the worse part—rather, we may say, in putting such a man as Lord Charlemont at their head, they had chosen already, and now there was no help for it.

This weak, well-intentioned, and extremely *good sort* of man thought, at this crisis, more of the peace of his country than of its freedom. On Monday morning he repaired to the convention, with a few of his friends and partisans, before the usual hour of assembling ; cut short some angry and patriotic eloquence on the subject of the proceedings of Saturday, on the polite parliamentary ground, that "it was not usual to notice in one house what was said in another ;" got a loyal and constitutional address rapidly voted to his Majesty, together with some unanimous resolutions for a constitutional agitation of the reform question, and dissolved the convention. The rotunda was speedily vacated by the select committee of management who had helped their chairman in this shabby trick ; and when the great body of the delegates arrived at the usual hour, they found the doors closed, the chairman gone, and learned with amazement that their Grand National Convention was over.

This was the first blow which the Volunteers had received, and it was fatal. From the morning of Monday, the 1st of December, 1783, their influence on the destinies of Ireland was practically null. They had measured their strength with the parliament, and the parliament had come off victorious. The Catholic question had divided them (a most righteous

* Hardy's "Life of the Earl of Charlemont," vol. ii., pp. 135-137.

retribution this—they could not be free, because they would not be just), and the prejudice which respected the legality and constitutionality of a rotten legislature paralysed them. They fell, and with them fell the last hope of peace, freedom, and good government for Ireland. They did not immediately disband; for some ten years after this, they continued meeting and resolving, exercising and reviewing, but the virtue was gone out of them. These Volunteer reviews appeared henceforth, says Barrington, “only as boyish shows, to amuse the languid vanity of their deluded general. He passed their lines in military state, he received their salutes with grace and condescension, and recommended them to be tranquil and obedient; and, after a peaceful campaign of four hours’ duration, composed his mild and grammatical dispatches, and returned to his Marino (a favourite villa residence), and to the enjoyment of the more congenial elegancies of literature and of private friendship.” Never had a noble and hopeful beginning a more lame and impotent conclusion, than in this business of the Irish Volunteers.

The promised “constitutional” agitation of the reform question did not amount to much. Early in the next year (1784) a second Reform Bill—*Protestant*, like the other—was brought into parliament by Flood, and rejected, the result of which rejection was popular outrage and rioting—the result of which rioting was a course of ministerial and parliamentary attacks on the freedom of the press, with all sorts of violences and illegalities on both sides, in which it were hard to say which party behaved the worst.* A little more agitation was got up in the summer; strong resolutions were passed at metropolitan and county meetings, in some of which the “rights of our Roman Catholic brethren” found favourable mention, and a Grand National Congress was summoned at Dublin, for the 25th of October. But “strong resolutions” had lost much of their efficacy since the dissolution of the Volunteer convention; the Attorney-General (Fitzgibbon) met strong resolutions with strong acts, without being over-nice on the point of legality—summoning magistrates were prosecuted, and printers and publishers of strong resolutions imprisoned; and, when the day of meeting came, the Grand National Congress turned out a sorry failure. The spirit of the nation was weakened by party division, and its heart sick with disappointment. Irishmen had not yet learned the art and science of peaceful, constitutional agitation.

Ireland was now, therefore, left in the hands of her parliament. That legislature for whose independence the Volunteers had exercised and reviewed, had debated and resolved, had menaced England and been ready to shed their blood, was now, with all its corruptions unreformed, the sole, unchecked, and irresponsible ruler of the Irish people. The result was indescribably mischievous. The independent parliament was found to transcend, in its shameless and sordid tyranny, all that had ever been previously realised or imagined of misgovernment in Ireland. The cause of this change for the worse lay in the essential nature of the new relations which the revolution of 1782 had established between the two countries. Before the independence, it might be highly convenient and desirable, but it was not absolutely necessary, to Great Britain, to

* See Plowden’s “Historical Review,” vol. ii., pp. 85-95. It was found necessary, this year, to legislate against the practice of *houghing soldiers*.

command a majority in the Irish House of Commons; a dependent legislature in Dublin might safely be allowed some little latitude while there was a supreme British parliament to undo its misdoings, make good its omissions, overawe its petulance, and check with a strong hand its aberrations from the line of British policy. The independent and co-equal legislature could not be safely indulged in any such vagaries. A British majority in the Irish Commons was now an essential condition of the integrity of the empire. Exactly in the same degree in which Ireland was necessary to Great Britain, a sure working majority in the Irish parliament was necessary to Great Britain, let the cost of gaining and keeping that majority be what it might. The empire could not stand, if the two parliaments were not at one in their politics; they *must* be kept together somehow, or there would come a war of separation. Hence arose a system of parliamentary bribery and corruption, unparalleled in the history of parliaments, carried on with undeviating regularity, and on a scale of the wildest prodigality in point of expense, from the revolution of 1782 down to the year of the legislative union. Hence a state of things under which a law-officer of the crown (Fitzgibbon*), could threaten parliament, when hesitating in its obedience, with the *cost of breaking down an opposition*. Hence a profusion, venality, jobbery and speculation, unexampled and unimagined,† in all the departments of government—impunity being assured to the worst public offenders if they had but parliamentary influence to back them. Hence an Irish pension list, exceeding, by many thousands annually, even that of England, and regularly growing under the hands of each successive viceroy, with every fresh parliamentary difficulty. Hence that system detailed by Grattan, in his speech of February 20, 1790, when he charged the government, in the boldest and distinctest terms—courting and demanding parliamentary inquiry—with *selling peerages*—not figuratively, but literally; selling peerages for money, and with that money buying seats and votes in the Commons—thus making the two branches of the legislature auxiliary to each other's corruption, selling the aristocracy to buy the democracy. We are not to suppose, from all this, that a parliament of Irishmen was, by any law or necessity of Irish nature, worse than a parliament of Englishmen and Scotchmen. But the policy of Great Britain required, in the new relations of the countries, that the British minister for the time being should be quite sure of an Irish majority, to work smoothly along with his British majority; and the wealth of Great Britain supplied the means of carrying that policy into effect.

On the whole the policy was tolerably successful. The British minister could, usually and habitually, command the votes of at least two-thirds of the Irish House of Commons; but with some remarkable exceptions—*two* in particular, in which the independent parliament really did assert its independence, and decide national questions in a national spirit. These

* On Grattan's motion for a short money bill, February 25, 1789.

† When the Marquis of Buckingham commenced his viceroyalty (in 1787) with a vigilant overhauling of the public accounts, the dismay in all the offices was terrible; there was a general absconding of clerks, treasurers, and secretaries, and some cutting of throats. For further particulars, see Plowden's "Historical Review," vol. ii., p. 199. Yet this nobleman soon lost his virtue. He had not been three years in Ireland before he found it necessary to bribe and job on a larger scale than the boldest of his predecessors.

two exceptions are of the sort which, as grammarians say, *prove the rule*. The Irish parliament asserted its independence and nationality, and the British Minister resolved accordingly that, on the first convenient opportunity, the Irish parliament should cease to be; that the independent nationality should be absorbed in a legislative union. The first of these Irish parliamentary divarications from the line of British imperial policy occurred in 1785, in the business of the celebrated *Commercial Propositions* of Mr. Pitt. The general object of these propositions, as originally stated by their framer, was one which in the present day seems unexceptionable and excellent enough. It was the "commercial equality" of the two countries; the entire, permanent, and irrevocable identity of the fiscal arrangements of Great Britain and Ireland, with reference to foreign trade. Of these Commercial Propositions, introduced by Mr. Pitt into the British legislature in May, 1785, and eventually adopted by both houses of the British parliament—the most obnoxious to Ireland was the fourth, which runs thus:—

"That it is highly important to the general interests of the British empire *that the laws for regulating trade and navigation should be the same in Great Britain and Ireland*; and therefore, that it is essential towards carrying into effect the present settlement, that *all laws which have been made, or shall be made, in Great Britain*, for securing exclusive privileges to the ships and mariners of Great Britain, Ireland, and the British colonies and plantations, and for regulating and restraining the trade of the British colonies and plantations, such laws, imposing the same restraints, and conferring the same benefits on the subjects of both kingdoms, *should be in force in Ireland, by laws to be passed by the parliament of that kingdom*, for the same time, and in the same manner, as in Great Britain."

This was a bold stroke. It was an attack on the independence of Ireland at the precise point at which she was most sensitive; an attempt to get back, in the form of perpetual and irrevocable treaty, that power of Great Britain to legislate for Ireland, which Ireland and her Volunteers had successfully abolished in 1782. It was a proposition for making the Irish legislature a mere registration-office for British acts of parliament. It was what Grattan called it (in his speech of August 12, 1785), "a *union, an incipient and a creeping union*; a virtual union, establishing one will in the general concerns of commerce and navigation, and resposing that will in the parliament of Great Britain; it was a union in which the Irish parliament would preserve its existence after it had lost its authority;" it was "a declaration that the full and free external legislation of the Irish parliament was incompatible with the British empire." Altogether, it was a thing not to be endured—the whole soul of Ireland turned against it. The memories and aspirations of 1782 were not yet quite extinct in the Irish legislature; the Commercial Propositions were received there with scorn and indignation, and on the 12th of August, 1785, after a debate of eighteen hours, the ministerial majority was so slender as to be considered equivalent to a defeat, and the plan was abandoned. Pitt never forgot nor forgave the independent legislature his defeat on this occasion. It showed that the independence was, after all, a reality,—that the two countries actually were *two*, and not one. This triumph of Irish nationality and independence over British imperial policy laid the foundation, in the minister's mind, of the legislative union.*

* The ministerial mind was spoken, with more warmth than discretion, by Fitzgibbon in the debate of the 15th August, when he said—"Great Britain is not easily

The next explosion of Irish parliamentary independence was in 1789, on the Regency Question. In January of that year Mr. Pitt introduced, and eventually carried through both houses of the British legislature, a bill entrusting the regency of Great Britain, for so long as the malady of George III. should continue, to the Prince of Wales; with certain considerable limitations, however (as to the right of granting peerages and pensions), which were in the last degree mortifying to the Prince. The minister entirely intended and expected that Ireland would follow the example of Great Britain; at the same time, he had so vivid a remembrance of the business of 1785, that he determined to adopt every possible precaution to avoid the recurrence of a similar humiliating defeat. Unlimited powers and peremptory orders were sent over to Dublin Castle, to *manage the Irish Parliament* by every devisable method of bribery and intimidation, and not to call the houses together until the Viceroy should be sure of a majority. The powers were lavishly used, and the orders faithfully obeyed; but it was all in vain. Dublin Castle and the British treasury together could not carry their point. The canvass was unsuccessful, and the Lord Lieutenant was obliged at last to summon parliament for the 5th of February, with a clear foreknowledge of defeat. This regency question was one which appealed strongly to the pride of nationality. It was a question on which the Irish parliament had feelings in common with the Irish people; and then, supposing that the King should not recover, it would be a fine stroke of policy to secure the good regards of the Prince and his new cabinet, by giving him powers and prerogatives which Great Britain had refused. The result was that, not without much embarrassment and hesitation on the part of the courtiers and placemen,* both houses of the Irish parliament voted an address to the Prince, soliciting his acceptance of an unrestricted regency of the kingdom of Ireland, requesting him "to exercise and administer," during the continuation of his Majesty's indisposition, "*all* regal powers and prerogatives to the crown and government thereof belonging." On the 19th of February, the two Houses waited on the Lord Lieutenant with their address, and requested him to transmit it to the Prince. The Viceroy refused; whereupon the House of Commons passed a vote of censure on his Excellency, and sent a deputation of their own to England to hand the address to the Prince, by whom it was most graciously received.

Most unluckily for these patriots, while the deputation were in London *the King recovered*; and the refractory majority soon experienced the effects of their late escapade, in a wholesale clearing-out of government offices, great and small. To Ireland and her independence, the conse-

roused, but if roused she is not very easily appeased; and therefore I say *Ireland is a besotted nation if she seeks to quarrel with England.*"

It is curious that these Commercial Propositions were almost equally odious (though on other grounds) in England. The manufacturers vehemently resisted the modified commercial equality which they were designed to establish. The first time, we believe, that the name of *Robert Peel* (the father of the Premier) appears in history, is on this occasion, as one of a deputation of alarmed and aggrieved Lancashire manufacturers at the bar of the House of Commons.

* One Sir John Tydd, a friend of government, on being asked "how he intended to play his cards," sagaciously replied, "that it was difficult to say, until he knew what were *trumps*."

quence of this affair was more serious, though less immediately apparent—viz., the deadly hostility of two most formidable and powerful enemies—the King and Mr. Pitt. It was now understood what the adjustment of 1782 really meant—Great Britain and Ireland might, in a contingency, which had occurred, and might occur again, come to have *two distinct executives*. This regency question, coming on the back of the commercial question, settled, in the minds of the minister and his royal master, the question of the legislative union.*

As we are not writing the history of this period, but only sketching such a general outline of it as may prepare the reader to approach the events of 1798 and the years immediately preceding, with a full understanding of their causes, we abstain from going further into the details of Irish parliamentary history during the years following the legislative independence. The general character of Irish legislation and government, as it affected the happiness and rights of the Irish people, may be sufficiently inferred from what we have already seen of the constitution of the legislature, and its relations to Great Britain. Independent Ireland was governed as a province, but far worse governed than provinces commonly are; for the mother country, destitute of imperial control, was obliged, in all things that did not touch her own interests, to accommodate and humour the colonial "House of Assembly," which had broken loose from her supremacy. From the year of independence, until the commencement of the French revolution, the political condition of Ireland grew steadily worse and worse. With the important exception of an increasing commercial activity and prosperity, consequent on the liberation of her trade from the shackles of British legislation, we know not of any one thing that she gained by the revolution which we retraced in the last chapter. From the hour that the Volunteers first became divided and enfeebled, every public abuse took deeper root, struck out lustier branches, and bore a more pestiferous fruit; acts of legislative and administrative oppression were multiplied and aggravated by the assured impunity of their perpetrators, and the efforts of the dwindling minority of honest men in parliament sank into a more confirmed and inveterate hopelessness. Every liberal, reasonable, and honest motion, however moderately worded, however palpable and enormous the grievance against which it might be directed, was unfailingly crushed by placed and pensioned majorities. Not a thing could the liberal minority do, or get done, during ten weary years of parliamentary effort. They could not obtain the common elementary securities for parliamentary freedom, as recognised in the constitution of Great Britain, nor the most gentle abatement of grievances unknown to Great Britain; not a pension bill, nor a place bill, nor a bill establishing ministerial responsibility for ministerial acts, nor a bill to prevent revenue officers and other small hangers-on of government from voting at elections, nor a bill to prevent offices and reversions of offices from being given to absentees, nor a bill for regulating the tithe of

* It might have been thought that, at least, Ireland had made *one* fast friend by this affair. In the month of February, 1789, the Prince of Wales said to Mr. Pelham, who was writing to Grattan, "*Tell Grattan that I am a most determined Irishman.*"—"Life of Grattan," vol. iii., p. 373.

The "determined Irishman" resisted, to the last moment to which resistance was safe or possible, the enfranchisement of the Catholic Irish people, and showed his Irish sympathies by crossing the channel, in 1821, with *Castlereagh* for his best-loved and honoured companion.

the miserable Munster peasant's potatoes. Every popular grievance, civil, political, and ecclesiastical, was industriously aggravated, till popular discontent reached *rebellion point*; and every tumult or disturbance which could, with any sort of decency, be designated "rebellion," was industriously improved into a police bill, a Whiteboy act, or some other such piece of machinery for putting the largest possible quantity of arbitrary power into the worst possible hands.*

On the whole, we doubt whether history can show a worse governed country than Ireland during the years of her so-called independence, or a more corrupt, degraded, and mercenary legislative body, than the parliament which Volunteer bayonets had emancipated from British control.

This was THE DISAPPOINTMENT which expressed itself in those renewed popular efforts which eventually terminated in the Rebellion of 1798—such a disappointment as, coming after such a success, it has seldom been the historian's lot to record.

CHAPTER V.

RENEWED POPULAR EFFORTS—INFLUENCE OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION ON IRELAND—BELFAST POLITICS—THEOBALD WOLFE TONE—FIRST SOCIETY OF UNITED IRISHMEN—THE MISTAKE OF 1783 CORRECTED—THE NEW CATHOLIC DEMOCRACY—THE CATHOLIC QUESTION IN 1792—THE GRAND JURIES—THE BACK LANE PARLIAMENT.

IN the last chapter we completed our Introduction to the History of the Irish Rebellion of 1798. The reader is now in possession of the more material of those facts and relations of Irish history and politics which constitute the causes of that popular effort—or rather, that series of popular efforts—of which the rebellion of 1798 was the explosive termination. In the social and political condition of the Irish Catholics under the execrable Penal Code—stripped of every civil franchise, injured and insulted in every domestic relation, cramped in every industrial pursuit (except the hewing of wood and drawing of water for their Protestant task-masters), branded with one universal, all-pervading attainder and outlawry, the very fact of their existence not recognised by the law, and their right to breathe contingent on the connivance of government—we have seen one of the two great elements of the social state and political history of Ireland in the eighteenth century; and in the gradual rise and progress, among the Irish Protestant people, of a spirit of nationality and independence—as represented by the names of Molyneux, Swift, and Lucas, and expressed in a standing and growing parliamentary opposition to the British ministry and legislature, from about the middle of the century to

* If any of our readers wish for a brief compendious view of the way in which Ireland was governed at this period, they may read Grattan's speeches in 1788 and 1789, on the Dublin Police Bill. The whole thing is there, in small—the wastefulness, the inefficiency, the extortion, the recklessness of personal and social rights, the love of oppression for oppression's sake.

the period of the American War—we have traced the development of the other. In the struggle of Ireland and her Volunteers against British supremacy, and the conquest of free trade and legislative independence, we have seen the partial and temporary union of these two elements, and noted the brilliant success that followed that first grand effort of united Irishmen. And in the years of wretched and wicked misgovernment that ensued; in the disappointment of every popular expectation, and defeat of every popular effort; in the continuance and aggravation, under a new name, of the worst evils of the old English ascendancy, we have marked the consequences of that disunion which religious bigotry so soon effected between the two great sections of the Irish people. The Volunteers ceased to be formidable when they ceased to be just—they could not be free, because their definition of freedom included the slavery of their Catholic countrymen. By union, Ireland achieved the independence of her parliament; by disunion, she failed of achieving that reform of parliament, without which the independence could be nothing better than a nuisance with a fine name; she paid the penalty which nature ever allots to injustice, in the practical break-down of one of the noblest national efforts that history records.

We have seen that the experiment of the legislative independence turned out to be a failure. It failed of producing its expected fruits of peace, freedom, good government, wise laws, and honest administration. It failed, because the power that achieved the legislative independence could not, for lack of wisdom and virtue, go on to achieve legislative reform, but gave way on the first attempt, crippled by the party division consequent on religious animosities. Ireland was disappointed, and the disappointment was excellently well deserved. We are now to trace the history of those renewed efforts, which began when Irishmen found their mistake and set themselves resolutely to repair it—when the two great sections of the Irish people combined their several grievances in one common mass of discontent and agitation, and joined their several forces in one phalanx of UNITED IRISHMEN; and which went on and on, year after year, until, under the action of the irritants unsparingly applied by an incendiary government, the whole together exploded in the Rebellion of 1798.

At the commencement of the French Revolution, the political state of Ireland was at its lowest point of depression. The spirit of 1782 gave but few and feeble signs of its existence. The Volunteers still went on with their periodical exercisings and reviewings, but division had weakened, and disappointment had chilled them; their numbers had declined, and their old political vitality seemed extinct. The popular cause was altogether hopeless in a parliament bought and sold by British ministries, unless some new pressure from without could be brought to bear on its corruptions; and the materials of such pressure from without were as yet non-existent, or non-apparent. The energy of government was all expended in devising and adjusting the requisite bribes for an habitually obsequious, but occasionally refractory legislature, and in enacting police bills and Whiteboy acts for the people; and the strength of the nation was wasting itself in aimless local insurgency. In the south, Whiteboys and Rightboys were waging a barbarous war of nature against a yet more barbarous state of society and law, indulging themselves in the one last luxury which landlord and clerical exaction had

left within reach of the most miserable peasantry under the sun,* that of revenging themselves on the nearest authors of their misery, and getting their existence recognized by the light of midnight conflagrations; and the north was already disorganised by the feuds of Peep-of-Day Boys and Defenders,† who carried on, during many successive years, a cruel war of mutual plunder and bloodshed, in which the worst crimes were stimulated by the most savage passions, and sanctified by the holiest names. The mind of Catholic Ireland still lay prostrate under the debilitating operation of the accursed penal code; some partial and mincing modifications of which (in 1778 and 1782) had not yet produced their natural result, of giving its victims a keener sensitiveness to the oppressions which remained. And the Protestant Liberal party gave no other signs of life than perpetually introducing into Parliament certain small measures of reform, which were perpetually defeated, and instituting a paltry Whig Club, which made it a standing order to *exclude all discussion of the Catholic Question*. The famous Whig toast—"The Sovereignty of the People," was interpreted by these reformers as meaning the eternal slavery of five men out of every six.

Such was Ireland, when the FRENCH REVOLUTION burst like a thunder-clap on Europe; uprooting a monarchy of fourteen centuries' growth, decomposing all old ideas, and loosening the foundations of all old institutions, proclaiming the Rights of Man as the basis and legitimating principle of all law and polity, and turning the long-deferred hopes of nations, no more into heart-sickness, but into eager and exulting joy. It was the most potent stimulant that has ever been administered to

* Fitzgibbon (afterwards Lord Clare) is an unexceptionable authority on this point. In a debate of the 31st of January, 1787, he said that "he was well acquainted with the province of Munster, and that it was impossible for human wretchedness to exceed that of the miserable tenantry of that province, he knew that the unhappy tenantry were ground to powder by relentless landlords."

Grattan's speeches about this time, on the tithe grievance, show that there were grinders of the poor more "relentless" even than the landlords.

† Of these Peep-of-Day Boys and Defenders we shall have more to say further on, when the latter assumed a more permanent form, took a more definite and extensive organization, and became an element of the Rebellion of 1798. For the present, it may be enough to quote the following general account of these insurgent associations from Dr. Madden:—

"Vast numbers of Protestant tenants emigrated from Ireland, and chiefly from Ulster, to America, just before the commencement of the revolutionary war. Their place was chiefly supplied by Catholics, who appeared ready to work as labourers for lower wages, and to pay higher rents as tenants. The Protestants of Ulster felt themselves injured by these new competitors in the labour and land-market, and they resolved to drive the Catholics back to Connaught. Armed bodies, under the name of 'Peep-of-Day Boys,' attacked the houses of the Catholics, ill-treated their persons, burned their houses, and wrecked their property. On the other hand, the Catholics formed an association for self-protection, under the name of 'Defenders,' and the two parties engaged in a desultory and murderous warfare, in which it is obvious that the name of religion was a mere pretext, by which the parties disguised their real objects from others, and even from themselves. This social war excited a rancorous animosity between the lower ranks of Protestants and Catholics."—"United Irishmen," vol. i., p. 29.

Of all these agrarian and peasant outbreaks, under the various names and forms which they have from time to time assumed—White Boys, Right Boys, Oak Boys, Heart-of-Steel Boys, Peep-of-Day Boys, Defenders, Whitefeet, Blackfeet, and Ribbonmen—the reader will find a full account in the valuable work of Mr. G. C. Lewis, "On Local Disturbances in Ireland, and the Irish Church Question."

popular aspiration and effort. In that "era of hope," it seemed as if king-ridden and priest-ridden man had but to arise in the majesty of nature, and all his shackles would drop off in the twinkling of an eye; it was like the breaking-up of a frost of centuries, and the commencement of an eternal spring. Ireland could not long remain unmoved in the general waking-up of nations. The effect of the French Revolution on Ireland was rapid and decisive, in rousing the different sections of the Irish people from the stupor into which they had sunk since the failure of the Volunteer Reform Convention of 1783. It attracted the sympathies and kindled the zeal of the Dissenter of the north, who was already, in virtue of his creed, more than half a republican; it breathed new life into the Catholic of the south, whose long-standing religious predilections and political traditions had always laid him peculiarly open to French influence; it was a practical demonstration that "Popery" was no more necessarily connected with "Slavery," than with "brass money and wooden shoes;"* it brought Protestant and Catholic together, into a union based on common rights and interests, and cemented by a common nationality, and gave occasion to that Association of United Irishmen, whose history will, from this point, occupy the central place in our narrative.

The influence of the French Revolution on Ireland appeared first in Belfast, the metropolis of northern dissent and liberalism. The politics of Belfast are an important element of Irish history at this epoch. This town had been the source and centre of the Volunteer movement; it was now again to take the lead in stirring and guiding the public mind of Ireland. We have already seen something of the character of these dissenting Protestants of the north. Scotch by descent, though thoroughly Irish by adoption; Presbyterian by religion; manufacturers and traders by occupation; and, since the Volunteer time, citizen-soldiers by discipline and habit—the Belfast people were fully imbued with the speculative republicanism, and the practical democratic and reforming tendencies which naturally arise from such a combination. Such men never would be slaves, nor would they always remain bigots. With all the self-acting, self-relying spirit of Protestantism, they would be the first to rid themselves of its sectarian narrowness, and to subordinate the little Protestant interest to the great Irish interest. The men of Belfast had not participated in the blunder of 1783; and, now that all its consequences had developed themselves, they would not be slack in proclaiming and repairing it. The Belfast Volunteers had specially instructed their delegates to the Dublin Convention of that year (they were almost alone in their liberality) to support the right of Catholics to an equality with Protestants in all the franchises of Irishmen; and nowhere were the results of the most pernicious error which then ruined the cause of reform, and broke the strength of reformers, better understood or more keenly felt than in this town.

The political republicanism and religious liberalism of Belfast remained unimpaired, during the years of disappointment that followed the epoch of the Volunteer struggle. In the summer of 1789, we find the good,

* The old Protestant toast of the "Pious and Immortal Memory" glorifies King William as a "Deliverer" from these four mischiefs.

narrow, Whig Lord Charlemont enumerating, among "the causes of his discontent," *the politics of his Belfast friends*;* and the politics of his Belfast friends were destined to occasion yet further discontent to good people of Lord Charlemont's way of thinking. As the revolution in France went on, startling men's imaginations and stimulating men's thoughts with its rapid succession of events, the citizens of Belfast resumed, with new hopes, their long-suspended political activity. The Volunteer Association had sunk into comparative insignificance. The secret of its failure had long since ceased to be a secret, except to a few incorrigible bigots, and the leading men of the little world of Belfast politics saw that some new political organization was wanted, on a wider basis, and that *the Irish Protestant never could be free until the Irish Catholic ceased to be a slave*.† In the summer of 1791, the idea of such an organization was suggested by SAMUEL NEILSON, a Belfast woollen-draper, and member of one of the old Volunteer corps—one of the very best and truest of the many good and true men with whom the progress of this history will make us acquainted—to his friends and political coadjutors, Henry Joy M'Cracken and Thomas Russell. Parliamentary reform and Catholic emancipation were to be the foundation principles of the new association—Irishmen, as Irishmen, without distinction of creed, its members. Neilson said, "Our efforts for reform hitherto have been ineffectual, and they deserved to be so, for they have been selfish and unjust, as not including the rights of the Catholics in the claims we put forward for ourselves."‡ The suggestion did not long remain inoperative. In the month of September in this year, THEOBALD WOLFE TONE (an intimate friend of Thomas Russell's), then a young barrister without briefs and without law, but with a clear head and a warm Irish heart, published, under the signature of "A Northern Whig," a pamphlet entitled, "An Argument on behalf of the Catholics of Ireland," which had a powerful effect on the public mind, especially among the northern Dissenters, against whose prejudices the argument was mainly pointed. The precise position of the question at this time, and the objects of the more enlightened of the popular leaders, appear from what Tone says in connection with this publication:—

"The Catholic question was, at this period, beginning to attract public notice; and the Belfast Volunteers, on some public occasion (I know not precisely what) wished to come forward with a declaration in its favour. For this purpose, Russell, who by this time was entirely in their confidence, wrote to me to draw up and transmit to him such a declaration as I thought proper, which I accordingly did. A meeting of the corps was held in consequence, but an opposition unexpectedly arising to a part of the declaration which alluded directly to the Catholic claims, that passage was, for the sake of unanimity, withdrawn for the present, and the declaration then passed unanimously. Russell wrote me an account of all this, and it immediately set me thinking more seriously than I had yet done upon the state of Ireland. I soon formed my theory, and on that theory have unvaryingly acted ever since.

"To subvert the tyranny of our execrable government, to break the connection with England (*the never-failing source of all our political evils*), and to assert the independence of my country—these were my objects. To unite the whole people of Ireland, to abolish the memory of all past dissensions, and to substitute the common name of Irishman in place of the de-

* See his letter to Dr. Halliday—Hardy's "Life of the Earl of Charlemont," vol. ii., p. 191.

† Grattan.

‡ Madden's "United Irishmen," Second Series, vol. i., p. 79.

nominations of Protestant, Catholic, and Dissenter—these were my means. To effectuate such great objects, I reviewed the three principal sects. The Protestants I despaired of, from the outset, for obvious reasons. Already in possession, by an unjust monopoly, of the whole power and patronage of the country, it was not to be supposed they would ever concur in measures, the certain tendency of which must be to lessen their influence as a party, how much soever the nation might gain. To the Catholics I thought it unnecessary to address myself, because that, as no change could make their political situation worse, I reckoned upon their support to a certainty; besides, they had already begun to manifest a strong sense of their wrongs and oppressions; and, finally, I well knew that, however it might be disguised or suppressed, there existed in the breast of every Irish Catholic an inextirpable abhorrence of the English name and power. There remained only the Dissenters, whom I knew to be patriotic and enlightened; however, the recent events at Belfast had shown me that all prejudice was not yet entirely removed from their minds. I sat down accordingly, and wrote a pamphlet addressed to the Dissenters, which I entitled ‘An Argument on behalf of the Catholics of Ireland,’ the object of which was to convince them that they and the Catholics had but one common interest and one common enemy; that the depression and slavery of Ireland were produced and perpetuated by the divisions existing between them, and that consequently, to assert the independence of their country and their own individual liberties, it was necessary to forget all former feuds, to consolidate the entire strength of the whole nation, and to form for the future but one people. These principles I supported by the best arguments which suggested themselves to me, and particularly by demonstrating that the cause of the failure of all former efforts, and more especially of the Volunteer Convention in 1793, was the unjust neglect of the claims of their Catholic brethren.”*

The Argument was well timed and aimed, and met with considerable success. It was widely circulated by the Belfast people all through the north of Ireland, and effectually prepared the way for that union of Irishmen, the idea of which had been already conceived by some of their best men. The pamphlet had not been published a month, when Tone received an invitation from Samuel Neilson and others of the Belfast leaders, to pay them a visit with his friend Russell, and assist in the formation of the first United Irish Club. The invitation was accepted; and the result was that, in the course of a stay of about three weeks, industriously and successfully employed in political propagandism public and private,† Tone and his coadjutors organised the first SOCIETY OF UNITED IRISHMEN (October 18, 1791) on the basis of the following resolutions:—

I.—“That the weight of English influence in the government of this country is so great as to require a cordial union among all the people of Ireland, to maintain that balance which is essential to the preservation of our liberties and the extension of our commerce.

II.—“That the sole constitutional mode by which this influence can be opposed is by a complete and radical reform of the representation of the people in parliament.

III.—“That no reform is practicable, efficacious, or just, which shall not include IRISHMEN OF EVERY RELIGIOUS PERSUASION.”

The example of Belfast was promptly followed by the metropolis. On the completion of his northern mission, Tone returned to Dublin, and put himself in communication with the Protestant leaders of the popular cause there; and on the 9th of November, 1791, a Dublin Society of

* “Memoirs of Theobald Wolfe Tone, written by himself,” vol. i, pp. 64-66.

† For the particulars of which, see the selections from his diary appended to his Memoirs. We do not know more delightful reading anywhere than these journals of Tone; so truthful and life-like they are—such a store of valuable historic data and sagacious political remark, dashed with the best possible Irish fun and absurdity. They show us that which no history can show fully, and which few historians trouble themselves to show at all—that under-current of opinion and feeling in every-day private

United Irishmen was constituted, with the Honourable Simon Butler for its first chairman, and James Napper Tandy for its first secretary. The Belfast resolutions were adopted as the basis of the Society's proceedings, with the addition of the following test to be subscribed by every member on admission:—

"I, A. B., in the presence of God, do pledge myself to my country that I will use all my abilities and influence in the attainment of an *impartial and adequate representation of the Irish nation in parliament*; and, as a means of absolute and immediate necessity in the establishment of this chief good of Ireland, I will endeavour, as much as lies in my ability, to forward a *brotherhood of affection, an identity of interests, a communion of rights, and an union of power*, AMONG IRISHMEN OF ALL RELIGIOUS PERSUASIONS, without which every reform in parliament must be partial, not national, inadequate to the wants, delusive to the wishes, and insufficient for the freedom and happiness of this country."

Thus began that series of renewed popular efforts for self-emancipation which constitutes the especial subject of our present history. The formation of these United Irish Societies opened a new epoch in the history of Ireland. The mistake of 1783 was now discovered; and strong minds and brave hearts were banded for its undoing. Parliamentary independence without parliamentary reform had turned out a delusion; parliamentary reform without Catholic Emancipation had been found an impossibility, and was felt to be an absurdity. The work in which the Volunteers had failed was now to be attempted again, by new men on new principles—the stone which those builders had ignominiously rejected being made the head of the corner.

The United Irishmen of 1791, though they ultimately produced, are not to be confounded with the United Irishmen of 1798. The two societies were widely different in their respective constitutions, objects, and modes of proceeding—the latter having been organized only when the former was broken up by violent government interference. The United Irishmen of 1798, as we shall subsequently find, were a secret society, with separation from England and Republican government for their end, and armed rebellion, with French aid, for their means. The United Irishmen of 1791 looked not beyond the limits of the constitu-

life, of which public opinion and public events are but the expression and result. The following illustrates the kind of difficulty that beset Tone's mission as a preacher of union among Irishmen of all sects and creeds:—

"October 25, 1791.—Dinner at M^r Tier's; Waddel Cunningham, Holmes, Dr. Bruce &c. A furious battle, which lasted two hours, on the Catholic question; as usual, neither party convinced. Teased with the liberality of people agreeing in the principle, but doubting as to the expediency. Bruce, an intolerant high priest, argued sometimes strongly, sometimes unfairly; embarrassed the question by distinctions, and mixing things in their nature separate. We brought him at last to state his definite objection to the immediate emancipation of the Roman Catholics. His ideas are—'1st. Danger to true religion, inasmuch as the Roman Catholics would, if emancipated, establish an inquisition. 2nd. Danger to property, by reviving the Court of Claims, and admitting any evidence to substantiate Catholic titles. 3rd. Danger, generally, of throwing the power into their hands, which would make this a Catholic Government, incapable of enjoying or extending liberty!' Many other wild notions, which he afterwards gave up, but these three he repeated again and again as his creed."—"Memoirs," vol. ii., p. 384.

Of the incipient liberalism of the Belfast trading democracy, we have the following rather comical indication:—

"October 14.—Curious discourse with a hair-dresser (one Taylor), who has had two children christened by the priest, though he is himself a Dissenter, merely with a wish to blend the sects!"

tion—sought only an honest government by King, Lords, and Commons: their aim was “an equal and just representation of the whole people in parliament,” their proceedings were open and legal, and the responsibility of all that followed rested with the wicked government which made the best men in Ireland rebels and “traitors.” It is true that Theobald Wolfe Tone,* and probably others of the United Irish leaders—in Belfast especially—were, from the first, prepared to be driven by the government beyond all limits of law and constitution, and contemplated the most extreme possibilities without any violent repugnance. But republicanism and separation were not at this time, nor until long afterwards, the design, either avowed or unavowed, of the United Irish Societies. Both the language of their various resolutions and addresses, and the whole spirit of their public acts, indicate that their original purpose was as strictly constitutional as their means were peaceful, legal, and open. It was the sedition of the government that made the United Irishmen seditious.

Here, for the present, we must leave the new Societies of United Irishmen debating, resolving, addressing, corresponding, and otherwise agitating—their spirit rising, their numbers multiplying, their political consequence increasing, day by day: the Catholics, in particular, says their founder, “flocking in by crowds”—and see what was going forward the while among the poor degraded “Papists.” The ideas and events of the French revolution—in its earlier stages, that is, before it had assumed a decidedly anti-ecclesiastical character—had a powerful effect on the Catholic people of Ireland; awakening a spirit of political earnestness and independence, far beyond what might have been expected from the victims of the penal code. This effect first showed itself in the changed tone of the *Catholic General Committee*. So far back as about the year 1770, this Catholic General Committee, a body composed of their bishops, nobility, and the leading Catholic merchants and traders resident in Dublin, had been formed for the purpose of obtaining from government the repeal of a certain obnoxious Catholic tax, called quarterage; and the government, finding the committee on some occasions a convenient medium of communication with the Catholic body, connived at its continued existence. Political danger to be apprehended from it there was, assuredly, at that time, none. Its agitation was of the most innocent sort imaginable. The poor creatures were brought so low by a century of penal code, that they were “happy,” as Tone tells us, “in being allowed to go up to the Castle with an abominably slavish address to each successive Viceroy, of which, more-

* As early as 1790, Tone's opinions and aspirations went the length of an entire severance of the English connection. He says in his autobiography, speaking of this period,—

“I made speedily what was to me a great discovery, though I might have found it in Swift and Molyneux—namely, that the influence of England was the radical vice of our government, and, consequently, that Ireland would never be either free, prosperous, or happy, until she was independent; and that independence was unattainable whilst the connection with England existed.”—“Memoirs,” vol. i., p. 34.

He avows the same opinion in a letter to his friend Russell, written during this year, which afterwards fell into the hands of government. His Belfast Diary in 1791, shows that others besides himself were rapidly preparing for the *ultimatum* of a war of separation.

over, until the accession of the Duke of Portland, in 1782, so little notice was taken, that his Grace was the first who condescended to give them an answer; and indeed, for above twenty years, the sole business of the General Committee was to prepare and deliver in these records of their depression." All this was now about to be changed. A new spirit had for some time been working among them, the growth of commercial industry and Volunteer politics, which the events of the Continent stimulated into a more vigorous life and a hardier self-assertion. Within the walls of the Catholic Committee-room, as elsewhere in Europe, a sturdy democracy arose (well headed by one John Keogh), of new men with new ideas, who were not afraid, on occasion, of outvoting lords and bishops.

Occasion was not long wanting. In December, 1791, the more turbulent members of this Catholic General Committee, emboldened by the right hand of fellowship held out to them by the northern and metropolitan United Irishmen, determined on an immediate application to parliament for a repeal of the penal code.* It was necessary, however, first of all, to repeal the effects of that code on the "leading and respectable" members of their own body. Their peers, prelates and gentry threw every possible difficulty in their way; and, on its being decided by a large majority that parliament should be petitioned, these peers, prelates and respectable men had the infinite meanness to present an humble and dutiful address to the Lord Lieutenant, signed by sixty-eight great Catholic names, expressing the most devoted attachment to the law and constitution which did not recognise the fact of their existence and let them breathe only on connivance; and to assure his Excellency, by newspaper advertisement, that they did not wish to "embarrass the government" by asking for the commonest rights of citizenship. From this time, Lord Kenmare and the sixty-eight addressers seceded from the General Committee, and left the Catholic democracy to fight their battle alone. But the Catholic democracy were very rapidly learning how to fight their battle alone. In the Catholic Committee-room, as in the French Hall of National Assembly, the *Third Estate* was none the weaker for the loss of the other two.

The session of 1792 opened with a significant indication of the feeling of the government, that the new union of Irishmen of all sects and denominations was not conducive to the stability of the existing order of things, and was, if possible, to be severed by the early conciliation of the more numerous and less obtrusive of the two contracting parties. On the 25th of January, Sir Hercules Langrishe, a government member, moved (and was seconded by Mr. Secretary Hobart) a string of resolutions in favour of

* In the beginning of this year the committee had resolved, after long discussion and much altercation, and at the expense of a quarrel with Lords Fingall and Kenmare and other Catholics of "great respectability," on the wonderfully daring measure of applying to parliament, "with all humility, for such relief as the wisdom and justice of parliament might grant!" Their lordships and the gentlemen of great respectability would have nothing to do with so seditious a proceeding, especially as they apprehended that some of the committee had republican correspondents and sympathisers in the north. They accordingly made haste to save their own characters for loyalty, by presenting a separate address to the Lord Lieutenant, expressive of their entire deference to government, "in whose wisdom they reposed the fullest confidence."—See Hardy's "Life of Lord Charlemont," vol. ii., p. 262.

The humble petition of the committee, which, in fact, asked for nothing, they could not find a single member of the legislature willing to present.

Catholic concession, prefaced by some side-blows at "democracy;" the purport of which was, to admit Catholics to the profession and practice of the law, to remove all existing restraints on Catholic education, to permit intermarriages between Protestants and Catholics (under penalty, however, of disqualification for every Protestant taking the benefit of the permission), and to remove certain restraints and disabilities bearing on Catholic industry. The measure of course passed, but it did not answer the purpose of its promoters. In place of silencing complaint, it stimulated louder complaints and emboldened larger demands than ever. On the 18th of February, while Sir Hercules Langrishe's bill was moving quietly through the usual parliamentary stages, the legislature were shocked and insulted by the presentation of a petition from the Catholics of Dublin, humbly praying for the ELECTIVE FRANCHISE. This was too much for Protestant flesh and blood to bear. An angry debate ensued, in which the Catholic Committee in general, and the democratic leaders of it in particular, were belaboured with the most virulent invective. They were stigmatised as "a rabble of obscure porter-drinking mechanics, without property, pretensions, or influence, who met in holes and corners, and fancied themselves the representatives of the Catholic body, which disavowed and despised them." The sixty-eight addressers of the December previous were lauded to the skies for their "independence and respectability"—*they* were the true representatives of the Catholics of Ireland, and not the committee from whom they had seceded. At last, on the motion of Mr. David Latouche, the petition was ordered, by a majority of about ten to one, to be removed from the table of the house and REJECTED. A similar fate befel, on the same occasion, a pro-Catholic petition from a public meeting of the people of Belfast; and thus the question of the Catholic Elective Franchise was "set at rest"—for that night only.

It would have been better for the interests of the Protestant ascendancy if this Catholic petition of February, 1792, had been allowed to lie quietly on the table. The denial of the representative character of the Catholic General Committee raised a serious question, and had serious consequences. It was quite true, in point of fact, that the committee did not, otherwise than virtually, represent the Catholic people of Ireland; they were a self-appointed body; but, when the fact was thus brought home to their conscience, instead of sinking under the charge, they manfully rose above it, by resolving, without loss of time, to repair the alleged and confessed defect in their title, and make the virtual representation *actual*. As it had been charged against them that they did not speak the sense of the general body of Irish Catholics, they determined forthwith—not that they would cease from speaking—but that they would take out, in due form and with the least possible delay, a title to speak more loudly than ever. The Catholic Committee appealed now to the CATHOLIC PEOPLE. They published (in March, 1792) a regular business-like plan of *delegation*, through primary and secondary electoral assemblies, by which every parish, town, and county, should be actually and effectually represented, and the opinions, wants, and wishes—the intellectual, moral, and social strength of the entire Catholic population of Ireland, be concentrated in one focal point. This plan Theobald Wolfe Tone was appointed to carry into effect, as secretary to the General Committee.

The ascendancy men were taken altogether by surprise at this out-

break of energy and courage from the degraded, helot Catholic people, who had never before been a people. The publication of this plan of delegation was the signal for such an agitation and counter-agitation as Ireland had not yet seen. In the counties, the Protestant grand juries—in the towns, the Protestant corporations—met, and talked, and resolved, furiously and frantically, in that *life-and-fortune* style which must be so familiar to the ears of our senior readers.* Sedition, conspiracy, rebellion, treason—wicked and daring attempt—popish congress, popish democracy—our present valuable constitution in church and state—our present invaluable constitution in church and state; these and the like were the flowers of rhetoric with which the men of the ascendancy, aided by such high government functionaries as the Speaker of the House of Commons and the Lord Chancellor, lavishly decorated their conservative Protestant oratory. The Castle, too, was busy the while intriguing with the Catholic bishops and clergy, and doing its best, by speaking the poor creatures fair, to induce them to oppose the terrible measures of the “primary and secondary electoral assemblies.”† But it was all in vain; the Catholic body had got a new soul, and they were not to be soon frightened:—

“At first,” says Tone, “we were like young soldiers, a little stunned with the noise, but after a few rounds we begin to look about us, and, seeing nobody drop with all this furious cannonade, we took courage and determined to return the fire. In consequence, wherever there was a meeting of the ‘Protestant Ascendancy,’ which was the title assumed by that party (and a very impudent one it was), we took care it should be followed by a meeting of the Catholics, who spoke as loud and louder than their adversaries; and as we had the right clearly on our side, we found no great difficulty in silencing the enemy on this quarter. The Catholics, likewise, took care, at the same time that they branded their enemies, to mark their gratitude to their friends, who were daily increasing, and especially to the people of Belfast, between whom and themselves the union was now completely established.”‡

On the 2nd of December, 1792 (the elections being all completed), the CATHOLIC CONVENTION commenced its sittings in Taylor’s Hall, Back Lane, Dublin (in the same room in which King James’s Parliament had sat at the time of the revolution), under the cognomen, derisively applied by the ascendancy people, of the *Back Lane Parliament*.

* Plowden has preserved some specimens of this grand jury and corporation eloquence in his “Historical Review,” vol. ii., pp. 374-376. The Corporation of Dublin unanimously resolved, That they would support the Protestant ascendancy with their “lives and fortunes;” and that the said Protestant ascendancy consisted in “a Protestant king of Ireland—a Protestant parliament—Protestant electors and government—Protestant magistrates—Protestant army and revenue;” they omitted Protestant *taxation*. The whole to be kept together by “connexion with the Protestant realm of Great Britain.”

† The Catholic prelates and clergy of that day were very timid and somewhat slippery politicians, open both to cajolery and menace. The programme of their policy seems to have been—*anything for a quiet life*. Tone repeatedly expresses his abomination of the whole clerical *genus* in both of its species of Popish and Protestant. (See his Journals, *passim*.) This zealous pacificator appears to have had as much trouble with the Catholic priesthood as with those semi-liberal theologians of the north who “agreed in the principle, but doubted as to the expediency.” On the 15th of August, this year, he journalises the following note of a conversation with a liberal dissenting minister of the name of Birch:—

“He thinks *what I fear is true, that the Catholic clergymen are bad friends to liberty. The priest of Saintfield preached against United Irishmen*, and exhorted his people not to join such clubs, on which he was immediately rebuked in the chapel by one of his congregation.”—“Memoirs,” vol. ii., p. 398.

‡ “Memoirs,” vol. i., p. 88.

Of this Back Lane Parliament we shall have more to say in the next chapter. Meanwhile, events were going forward elsewhere, of considerably more consequence to the fate of the Irish Catholics than any debates and resolutions, either of Protestant grand juries or of Catholic General Committees. While the elections were in progress, Theobald Wolfe Tone, we observe, jots in his diary—

“Hear that the Duke of Brunswick has defeated the French under Dumourier, and cut the whole army in pieces. *Hope it is a lie.*”

If it had not turned out to be a lie, the sittings of the new Catholic Convention would have been of brief duration and small result.

CHAPTER VI.

PROGRESS OF THE UNITED IRISH AGITATION—JAMES NAPPER TANDY AND THE HOUSE OF COMMONS—PEEP-OF-DAY BOYS AND DEFENDERS—THEOBALD WOLFE TONE, HEAD-PACIFICATOR—THE FOURTEENTH OF JULY, 1792, AT BELFAST—THE BACK-LANE PARLIAMENT AGAIN—IRISH PAPISTS AT ST. JAMES'S.

It did turn out to be a “lie,” about the Duke of Brunswick having defeated Dumourier and the French. Before the Catholic elections were over, our zealous Secretary jots again—

“OCTOBER 11.—*The story of Dumourier a great lie! Huza! huza!! Brunswick and his army dying of the flux and running out of France, with Dumourier pursuing him—Huza! If the French had been beaten, it was all over with us. All safe now for this campaign—Huza!*”

That the Catholics and their secretary had good reason for huzzaging at the successes of republican France, we shall see better as we proceed. For the present we must go back a few months, and examine what was doing among the new Societies of United Irishmen—how they addressed, and resolved, and agitated, and with what result; and especially how they prospered in the good work of forwarding “a brotherhood of affection, an identity of interests, a communion of rights, and a union of power, among Irishmen of all religious persuasions.”

The United Irish Societies were not three months in existence without giving signs of a zeal and courage which showed that a new power was at work in the politics of Ireland. Their first conflict with the duly-constituted authorities was a clear success. In the month of February, 1792, the Solicitor-General (Toler) having, in his place in the House of Commons, spoken with exceeding disrespect of the new conspiracy of demagogues and agitators, JAMES NAPPER TANDY—formerly of the Liberty Brigade of Volunteer Artillery, now secretary to the Dublin Society of United Irishmen—conceived himself called upon to vindicate the honour and loyalty of the patriots, by *challenging* the Solicitor-General. Thereupon, the Solicitor-General complained to the House of a breach of privilege, and Tandy was ordered to be taken into custody by the serjeant-at-arms, and brought to

the bar of the House. The arrest was accordingly made forthwith, at Tandy's house, by three of the Commons' messengers; but the United Irish secretary, who seems to have had a most happy genius for escaping, invaluable in such troubled times (it brought him safe at last, through a thousand hair-breadth perils, to a quiet death in his bed), twice eluded the vigilance of his captors, and defeated the wrath of the House. The escape was adjudged to be an aggravation of the first offence, and the irritated legislators followed up strong resolutions against the contumacious United Irishman with an address to the Lord Lieutenant, praying that his Excellency would issue a proclamation, backed with a reward, for a third and final capture of Mr. Tandy. The proclamation was issued accordingly, and the whole revenue and police force of Ireland were enjoined to be on the alert, that no man answering to the government description of his person should leave the kingdom. Still, Mr. Tandy was nowhere to be found. The United Irish Society, being thus committed, through their officer and representative, with the House of Commons and the Castle, on a question of privilege and prerogative, had now a good opportunity for making a character with the public and trying their strength with the government. The further progress of the affair, which, as the first of its kind, has an interest that we shall not find it necessary to attach to every similar collision of "sedition" with authority, is thus related by Tone:—

"Under these circumstances, I cast my eyes on ARCHIBALD HAMILTON ROWAN, a distinguished member of the Society, whose many virtues, public and private, had set his name above the reach of even the malevolence of party; whose situation in life was of the most respectable rank, if rank be indeed respectable; and, above all, whose personal courage was not to be shaken,—a circumstance, in the actual situation of affairs, of the last importance. To Rowan, therefore, I applied; I showed him that the current of public opinion was rather setting against us in this business, and that it was necessary some of us should step forward and expose ourselves, at all risks, to show the House of Commons and the nation at large that we were not to be intimidated, or put down so easily. I offered, if he would take the chair, that I would, with the Society's permission, act as secretary, and that we would give our signatures to such publications as circumstances might render necessary. Rowan instantly agreed; and accordingly, on the next night of meeting, he was chosen chairman, and I pro-secretary in the absence of Tandy; and the Society having agreed to the resolutions proposed (which were worded in a manner very offensive to the dignity of the House of Commons, and in fact amounted to a challenge of their authority,) we inserted them in all the newspapers, and printed 5,000 copies with our names affixed.

"The least that Rowan and I expected in consequence of this step, which, under the circumstances, was, I must say, rather a bold one, was to be committed to Newgate for breach of privilege, and perhaps exposed to personal discussions with some of the members of the House of Commons; for he proposed, and I agreed, that, if any disrespectful language was applied to either of us, in any debate which might arise on the business, we would attack the person, whoever he might be, immediately, and oblige him either to recant his words, or give battle. All our determination, however, came to nothing. The House of Commons, either content with their victory over Tandy, who was obliged to conceal himself for some time, or not thinking Rowan and myself objects sufficiently important to attract their notice; or perhaps, which I rather believe, not wishing just then to embroil themselves with a man of Rowan's firmness and courage, (not to speak of his great and justly-merited popularity,) took no notice whatsoever of our resolutions, and, in this manner, he and I had the good fortune, and, I may say, the merit, to rescue the Society from a situation of considerable difficulty, without any actual suffering, though certainly with some personal hazard on our part. We had likewise the satisfaction to see the Society, instead of losing ground, rise rapidly in public opinion, by its firmness on the occasion. Shortly after, on the last day of the session, Tandy appeared in public, and was taken into custody, the whole Society attending him in a body to the House of Commons; he was ordered by the Speaker to be committed to

Newgate, whither he was conveyed, the Society attending him as before; and the Parliament being prorogued in half an hour after, he was liberated immediately, and escorted in triumph to his own house."

A further triumph awaited the dexterous and dauntless secretary, and raised still higher the spirit and influence of the Association. Tandy was prosecuted by order of the House of Commons, for the alleged breach of privilege, and acquitted by a Dublin jury.

What thoughts were now astir in Irishmen's minds, appeared in a curious legal case raised by this eccentric and daring agitator (whose "original portrait"* gives all the features of what the Scotch call a *dour chiel*), in consequence of this business with the House of Commons. Tandy brought a series of actions-at-law against the Lord Lieutenant, the Lord Chancellor, and every member of the Privy Council who had signed the proclamation for his arrest, on the ground that they had NO LEGAL AUTHORITY for that or any other act of government whatever; their appointments being under the great seal, *not of the kingdom of Ireland*, but of Great Britain. This point he managed to keep before the public, by one suit after another, for some six months; during which period the position was pertinaciously maintained (quite justly, we conceive, according to the then existing constitution of the kingdom of Ireland, as settled in 1782) by his counsel, Simon Butler and Thomas Addis Emmet, that, as Ireland was an independent kingdom, the great seal of England could not be recognised in an Irish court of law. The court was horrified at the scandal; threatened the attorney who had dared to sign the pleadings with attachment for contempt; struck the words, again and again, out of the record, as impertinent and scandalous; refused, again and again, to suffer the case to be argued; and it was not until the public mind had been thoroughly saturated with the "poison" of a doctrine which disowned the legality of the whole government of Ireland for the ten preceding years, that the point was allowed to be discussed, and set at rest (26th November,) by a short and angry judicial *dictum*. Tandy failed in form, but he succeeded in effect; reviving in the popular mind the old feeling of 1783, against the encroachments of Great Britain on the independence of Ireland.†

While the United Irishmen were thus establishing themselves in public estimation, by successful collision with the House of Commons and the government, they were not idle in their great work of establishing union and brotherhood between the two religious sections of the people. They addressed themselves, with an excellent judgment and abundant zeal, to the task of healing those sectarian and party animosities which had broken the strength and ruined the prospects of Ireland in 1783, and uniting the whole moral and physical force of the Irish people in one dense mass of opposition to British influence. During the summer of 1792, their chairman, Simon Butler, by order of the Dublin Society, drew up and published a "Digest of the Penal Code," enumerating, in all their revolting details, the barbarisms of that abominable system of legislative iniquity and religious rancour, in a way to arouse among the Catholics an indignation

* See Dr. Madden's "United Irishmen," Second Series, vol. ii.

† See a full account of this extraordinary business in the "Proceedings of the Society of United Irishmen of Dublin," Philadelphia, 1795, pp. 71-127.

which, till then, they had been too thoroughly enslaved and broken-spirited to be capable of feeling—and to gain over to the cause of emancipation all that was just, generous, and rational in the mind of Protestant Ireland. No single thing contributed more powerfully to cement the union of Irishmen than this publication, which emboldened the Catholics to raise their tone of demand, by assuring them of an adequate amount of Protestant sympathy and co-operation, and did much to shame down bigotry (wherever it was capable of shame) by holding up the mirror to its base and wicked nature. It was this “Digest of the Penal Code,” and the assurance of Protestant support of which it was a pledge, that carried the Catholics through that storm of the grand-jury life-and-fortune resolutions which we spoke of in the last chapter, and nerved them for the exertions which we shall presently record in this.*

The business of uniting Irishmen of all parties and persuasions was attended, however, with difficulties of a kind which legal digests were altogether insufficient to cope with. Union of Irishmen there could not be, to any effectual purpose of lasting political good, while the physical and moral strength of large masses of the people was wasting itself in an aimless partisan warfare. Already were Irish agitators beginning to learn that lesson, the full theory and practice of which have only been acquired in our own day, under the tuition of the man whose historical cognomen will probably be *THE AGITATOR*—that local outrage must cease, before efficient general agitation can begin. While the war of the *Peep-of-Day Boys and Defenders* went on, Societies of United Irishmen might address and resolve to all eternity, without bending or breaking the will of the government. It was a matter, therefore, of the first necessity to the agitators, to heal the Peep-of-Day Boy and Defender feuds. Ever since the year 1785, these two factions had been increasing in numbers, in ferocity, and in organisation. In its commencement, an agrarian quarrel—a feud of rival peasants and farmers, under-selling and over-bidding one another in the labour and land market; in its progress, a religious quarrel—the one party happening to be Protestant, and the other happening to be Catholic—this business of the Peep-of-Day Boys and Defenders had grown, by this time, to be a little civil war, of inveterate malignity and formidable extent. It had spread beyond the county of Armagh, its original seat, into Down, Louth,

* As we have more than once alluded to certain modifications of the Penal Code which had taken place in previous years, we may here put before the reader the condition in which—all modifications notwithstanding—the Irish Catholic stood before the law, so late as the close of the year 1792. We give the following summary from Simon Butler’s “Digest,” quoted by Plowden:—

“Such is the situation of three millions of good and faithful subjects in their native land. Excluded from every trust, honour, or emolument of the state, civil or military; excluded from all the benefits of the constitution in all its parts; excluded from all corporate rights and immunities; expelled from grand juries, restrained in petit juries; excluded from every direction, from every trust, from every incorporated society, from every establishment, occasional or fixed, instituted for public defence, public police, public morals, or public convenience—from the Bench, from the Bank, from the Exchange, from the University, from the College of Physicians—from what are they not excluded? There is no institution which the wit of man has invented, or the progress of society produced, which private charity or public munificence has founded for the advancement of education, learning, and good arts, for the permanent relief of age, infirmity, or misfortune, from the superintendence of which, and, in all cases where common charity would permit, from the enjoyment of which, the legislature has not taken care to exclude the Catholics of Ireland.”

Meath, and Cavan, with little interference from the gentry or the government, who appear to have been rather pleased than otherwise with a state of things which kept up popular disunion, and afforded an ever-ready pretext for all kinds of "strong" measures. The original cause of quarrel was fatally aggravated by that part of the Penal Code which prohibited "Papists" from bearing arms in their own defence. Of this law the Protestants in the disturbed districts took advantage, by paying their antagonists very early domiciliary visits, to search for arms (whence their name of Peep-of-Day Boys), in which visits they were in the habit of committing the cruellest and most insulting outrages. Heaven help the poor Papists! They *must* have arms, or they were not safe in their own houses (being still unrecognised by the protective power of law); and yet their having arms was an act of insurrection—the armed Papist was a rebel *ipso facto*. The dilemma may seem embarrassing to our logic; but human nature, which is the same in Irish Papists as in the rest of us, solved it without much ado. The Papists did arm—they did become rebels to the law, rather than see their houses plundered, their chapels wrecked, their wives and daughters insulted. They associated as DEFENDERS;* afterwards to become aggressors, and finally to be absorbed in the vortex of the

* As the general character of Defenderism is of interest to our history, from its connexion with subsequent political events, in which it became an important element, we subjoin (from Plowden) the oath and rules of the Defender Association, as they stood in the year 1789 :—

"The Oath.

"I, A. B., of my own free will and accord, do swear to be true to one another, will assist one another abroad and at home; and there are none to be admitted without the consent of the committee appointed by the said body; and they must in all things be under subjection to the said committee, in all things that are lawful, and not otherwise. And all words and signs to be kept secret from all that are not concerned, or forfeit this oath. And we are to meet once a month, where the committee thinks proper, and we are to spend what is agreeable to the company. And any person giving a lawful reason for his absence, he is not to be under censure. And all persons entering must be under all rules and regulations appointed by the said committee. And as in our former oath we are bound to his Majesty, King George III., and his successors to the crown, so for this present year, 1789, we promise faithfully the same obedience, and also, while we live, subject to the same government.

"The Rules to be observed.

"1. There is no Defender to strike one another, upon any account; or, if they do, to be excluded the company as long as the committee thinks proper. 2. There is no person to come to the monthly meeting drunk; or, if they do, to pay sixpence, and to be excluded for three months. 3. There is no person on any account to swear or speak loud in the company; and for every oath they are to pay what the committee thinks proper. 4. There is no person that formerly belonged to another body (that is to say, to a strange body), to be accepted without a line from the body he formerly belonged to. 5. There is no person to let any one know who belongs to their body, but those who went under the obligation. 6. There is no body of men to go to a challenge without leave of three of the committee at least. 7. There is nobody to get a copy of these without the leave of the grand master appointed by the general year's meeting, or deputies appointed by the said grand master, or his committee. 8. Let no person know no words or signs without being concerned; and they are not empowered to give or make known, by either words, or signs, or tokens, any that may hereafter come forth, or make it known to any company or body but ourselves, or our body. 9. There is no Defender to make himself known as a Defender, after being excluded, under fear of perjury; and each man continuing six months from this day must find a gun and bayonet, with other necessary accoutrements, or be excluded at the option of the committee."

The phraseology of the above sufficiently shows of what class the Defender organiza-

Rebellion of 1798. The Peep-of-Day Boys have also an historical importance, as the precursors of the *Orange Boys*, or ORANGEMEN.

In the year 1792, Defenderism had become more formidable than in any previous period of its existence. We have no wish needlessly to fill our pages with the horrors of a desultory agrarian warfare; but as the state of Ireland, the condition of its people, and the character of its government cannot be understood from mere generalities of description, we may quote the following as a sample of what was daily doing in that unhappy country :—

* Among other events of the year 1792, that tended to inflame the public mind, were the growth and extension of Defenderism. As the Defenders were generally Catholics, it then was, and has since been, the theme of the enemies to the Catholics to connect the cause of Catholic Emancipation with the cause and outrages of these lawless miscreants. Until that time they had not appeared beyond the counties of Armagh and Louth; now they suddenly appeared in bodies in the county of Meath, particularly in those parts which adjoin to Cavan. There, and in the adjacent parts of Cavan, there resided numerous tribes of Presbyterians, called by the common people *Scots*. Between these and the lower order of Catholics there had prevailed for many years an hereditary animosity; and it is hard to say on which side ignorance and religious prejudices preponderated. The Defenders on this occasion were the aggressors; their plan was to procure arms, and to deprive all those of arms who were not engaged in their cause. They began with the Presbyterians, and not in the most courteous manner.

** The Scots took the alarm. Their brethren of the county of Cavan joined, and they soon appeared in force; more formidable by their knowledge of the use of arms than by their numbers. They were encouraged and headed by magistrates, clergymen, and attorneys. Their fury against these aggressors, who were mostly Catholics, fell indiscriminately against all of that persuasion. The Defenders, who hitherto had acted only by night, now ventured to appear in open day. They assembled to the number of about one hundred and fifty men, some with fire-arms, and the rest with such weapons as they could procure, near Petersville, the seat of Mr. Tucker, a moderate and humane man. Their avowed intention was to rescue some of their party who had been detained as prisoners by the Scots in the little town of Baileborough; but on receiving intelligence that the Scots were marching into that neighbourhood, they altered their plan, and resolved to meet their old enemies. The Scots were accompanied with a party of the military, all under the direction of magistrates. On their approach the Defenders took advantage of a wall, and lay in ambush. But, notwithstanding this advantage, they did no execution; some of them discharged their pieces very awkwardly, and on the first fire from the military and Scots, they fled with precipitation. Such of them as were most closely pursued, sought shelter in the house of Mr. Tucker, and some of that gentleman's innocent labourers, terrified by what they were only spectators of, took refuge in the same place. The house was soon entered; innocent and guilty were dragged from their hiding places, and butchered in cold blood, with circumstances of barbarous cruelty. It is justice to say, that the military behaved on this occasion with as much humanity as gallantry. Some of the Peep-of-Day Boys, flushed with these outrageous murders, sanctioned by the presence of magistrates, on their return to Kells, most wantonly shot an innocent traveller on the road. After this exploit, they over-ran the country, pillaged, plundered, burned, without requiring any mark of guilt but religion. And their proceedings, if not encouraged, were at least connived at.*

tion was composed. "They had no persons in their body," says Dr. Madden, "of the upper, or even the middle class in life. The only man known among them above the condition of a labourer was a schoolmaster in Naas, of the name of Lawrence O'Connor, who was executed in 1796."

There is nothing in the oath and rules of 1789 that seems to betoken the coalition which subsequently took place between the Defenders and the later Societies of United Irishmen. A vague notion, in general, that "something ought to be done for Ireland," and a pretty active war, in particular, against hearth-money, tithes, county cess, high rents, and Protestants, appear to have been, for a long time, the extreme limit of their political ideas and aspirations. The talk of Liberty and Equality (which meant the extermination of aristocrats and Protestants) began some years afterwards.

* Plowden's "Historical Review," vol. ii., p. 385.

All which, of course, made it so much the worse for the Catholics, in their struggle for civil and political rights. As the Defenders happened to be mostly Catholics, their crimes were eagerly laid hold of by the ascendancy party, as a useful weapon in the emancipation controversy; it was considered a fine stroke of policy to implicate Catholic prelates, by a sort of constructive complicity, in arson, and insinuate burglary and murder against merchants who believed in transubstantiation. The Defender outrages were regarded less as a social evil to be repressed, than as a political advantage to be improved; the object of the government and its partisans was not so much to put down the Defenders, as to fasten their guilt on the whole Catholic body.

The United Irishmen of Dublin and Belfast could not be passive spectators of these doings of the busy devil of religious discord. Ireland could have no freedom without peace; and the work they had in hand could only be accomplished by the consentaneous sympathies and efforts of the very men whose hands were red with each other's blood. Accordingly, Neilson and Tone, during the summer of 1792, made several journeys through the northern and western counties, for the purpose of composing these local and partisan quarrels, calming the angry bigotry of both parties, and carrying the Union of Irishmen down into the heart of the democracy, Protestant and Catholic. Tone's Journals of these pacification tours (which were not, on the whole, successful) are vividly illustrative of the social and moral state of Ireland at that time, of the temper of different sections of the Irish people, and of the kind of difficulty which beset the enterprise of the Dublin and Belfast Associations. The following are his notes of a visit to Rathfriland, in the county of Down, where very serious disturbances then existed:—

"July 18, 1792. Set off with Neilson and young Lowry to Rathfriland. In about an hour the Catholics arrive from Down-Patrick. Meet Mr. Tighe, the Parson, Sam. Barber, the Dissenting Minister, Mr. Derry, the Priest, and about eighteen gentlemen of the neighbourhood. *Agreed on all hands, that the Protestants were the aggressors. Several have been killed on both sides.* Great offence taken at the Catholics marching about in military array, and firing shots at unseasonable times. The Catholics certainly wrong in that, and must, if possible, be stopped. The majority think that if that were accomplished, the disturbances would soon die away. *Some bigots think that their arms should be taken from the Catholics.* God forbid!—besides, the thing is in its nature impossible.

"Mr. Hutton (i.e., himself) proposes that the Catholics shall agree to desist from parading in bodies and firing, and the Dissenters shall declare that they will maintain the peace of the country against all who shall transgress, without distinction of party or religion. An amendment proposed by Neilson, that this declaration should be made by the Volunteers. The idea unanimously approved, and three officers then present (Captain A. Lowry, Captain Cowen, and Captain Barber,) engage for their respective companies. A refractory priest, of the name of Fitzsimons, much blamed; the Catholics engage to have him removed. They likewise propose to have a pastoral letter from their Bishop, and a circular one from the committee, to be read in every chapel, recommending peace and good order. *The Catholics always ready to make peace and keep it.* Cannot, on the whole, learn that they do anything worse than meet in large bodies, and fire powder; foolish, certainly, but not wicked. They break open no houses, *nor ever begin an attack.* The Protestants, however, extremely alarmed at their meetings, which, therefore, must, if possible, be suppressed. *The Catholic clergy have almost totally lost their influence since the people have got arms, so fatal to superstition and priestcraft is even the smallest degree of liberty.* The Catholics and Mr. Hutton receive the thanks of the meeting for their public spirit in coming down on the occasion. All part on excellent terms."

The "excellent terms" were not, however, of long continuance. In less than a month we find Rathfriland politics in a worse state than ever.

On the 11th of August, our zealous and able Head-Pacificator, then on a second expedition among the Peep-of-Day Boys, journalises the following:—

"Hear that Mr. Barber is of opinion *we ought not to go to Rathfriland, and has desired some one to write us word so*. It is surmised that his reason is, lest we might be insulted by some of the bigots in that town. Cannot help it; what must be, must be; and we *must go to Rathfriland*. Buy powder and ball, and load our pistols for fear of accidents. Afraid of Captain Swan, who is a bloody Peep-of-Day Boy; endeavour to make a pun on his name; something about *goose*, but it won't do. *Hear just now that if we go to Rathfriland we shall be houghed*: 'pleasant, but wrong.' What is to be done? This information we have from Mr. O'Neil, of Cabra; cowardly enough, but I dare say he *heard* it. Set off for Mr. O'Neil, of Bannvale, on our way for Rathfriland. Arrive at length at that flourishing seat of liberality and public virtue. Stop at Murphy's Inn, six in number, all valiant. Get paper and begin to write to Dr. Tighe, Mr. Barber, and Mr. A. Lowry. Stopped short by the intelligence that *the landlord will give us no accommodation!* The fellow absolutely refuses. He has cold beef and lamb chops, and will give us neither, but turns off on his heel. The dog is a Quaker. What is to be done now, at half-past four? *A striking proof of the state of politics in this country, when a landlord will not give accommodation for money to Catholics!* Get a Mr. Murphy at last, brother to our hospitable landlord, and a decent man: explain the motives of our coming to him. He seems very much ashamed of the behaviour of his brother, and in some degree apprehensive of our meeting some insult; which, however, he hopes may not happen. All stout; some of us determined to make the boors of Rathfriland smoke for it, if they attack us, particularly M'Nally, who has ridden from Newry armed, merely to assist us in case of necessity; manly and decided. The gentlemen of the town have learned, as we presume, that we are prepared, and *therefore make no attempt to duck us, as they had lamented they did not do on our last visit*. Leave Rathfriland in great force, the cavalry in the front. *See about 150 Peep-of-Day Boys exercising within a quarter of a mile of the town*. Suppose if we had attempted to lie in the town, we should have had a battle. Horrible thing, these religious discords, WHICH ARE CERTAINLY FOMENTED BY THE ARISTOCRATS OF THIS COUNTRY."

Disappointed among the democracy, the friends of peace, law, and order now applied, as a last resort, to the aristocracy of the county; but with little better result. On the 16th, Tone and Neilson are admitted to an interview with Lords Downshire and Hillsborough; but their lordships evince no liking for any other way of restoring or keeping the peace, than the old-established one. Lord Hillsborough is—

"Angry at the Committee's interference. *No notion of any mode of settling the disturbances but by a strong hand*. Talks of *more regiments of light horse*, and calls the Committee and the Defenders 'Dublin Papists,' and 'country Papists'; says our going down has done great mischief, though our motives may be good; abuses the men who formed the meeting at Rathfriland on the 18th July; says there are *four thousand stand of arms in the hands of the Defenders*, and if they will pile them up in one place, he will insure their protection; *inveighs bitterly against the communications between the Catholics through the country*, and against seditious publications, which he explains to signify *Paine*; says the laws have been equally administered, for that six Protestants have been hanged for Peep-of-Day Boy practices, and two of them on the spot where the burglary was committed. (*This is a lie*). In short, that he will see the laws execute themselves, without our interference. On the whole, his lordship was just civil, and no more. Fine fencing between his lordship and Mr. Hutton, who defends the Catholics with great address and ability; hits his lordship several times on the *riposte*. The ambassadors both bluff and respectful. State their case, and that they did not come until called upon; make a cut or two at the Protestant ascendancy about Rathfriland. *Admit the four thousand stand of arms*, but state that they have in no one instance been used offensively. Strike a little at the new corps; to the raising of which, and the spirit of the officers, we insinuate, almost the whole of the present alarm may be attributed. *Pin his lordship to the confession that the Catholics have never, in any case, begun the attack*. As to their meeting in bodies, admit it is improper, but state that they have always dispersed without doing

mischief. Finally, declare our conviction that, if the Catholics could see that they had equal protection with the Protestants, peace would be immediately restored. Part from their lordships, neither of us much pleased with the other."

On the whole, these rural missions of the United Irishmen do not seem to have succeeded. In the whole mass of these journals we can only discover one really successful attempt at pacification; which is so beautiful as to deserve transcribing. The missionaries leave their lordships, and—

"Arrive at Ballinahinch late. Introduced to M^cClokey, a 'proper man.' That neighbourhood almost totally converted, though very bad some little time back. A new corps raised there on Peep-of-Day Boy principles, converted by M^cClokey, who, in return, is chosen their lieutenant. All well. The Catholics and they are now on such good terms, that the Catholics lend them their arms to learn their exercise, and walk to see them parade, and both parties now in high affection with each other, who were before ready to cut each other's throats. All this done in about two months, or less, and by the exertions of one obscure man. What might not be done by the aristocrats of the County Down, if they were actuated by the same spirit?"

But, as the aristocrats of the County Down, and of other Irish counties (and the democrats likewise), were actuated by a quite different spirit, little or nothing was to be done. Peep-of-Day Boys and Defenders preferred their little Protestant and Popish partisanships to their Irish nationality; and it became increasingly apparent, every month, that the United Irish agitation, in its then existing form, could be no other than a middle-class movement.

Within these limits, however, the agitation went on bravely. The intelligence and patriotism of the best men of both religions were daily more and more aroused and concentrated in the work of national regeneration, on the basis of representative reform and religious equality. The events of French and European politics continued to exert their stimulating energy on the hopes and efforts of Irishmen. The Belfast commemoration, this year (1792), of the destruction of the Bastille, which went off with unusual splendour and *éclat*, sealed the union of the sects, so far as regarded the middle-class intelligence and feeling of each, and spirited them up to new and bolder efforts. Dissenters from Dublin were there, and deputies from the Catholic Committee were there; at sight of whom, the hair of Doctor Haliday's moderate Presbyterian wig is credibly reported to have miraculously turned grey. A grand Volunteer review was held; a polite cause being shown why it was "not thought proper to call on the venerable General of the Volunteer Army of Ulster, the Earl of Charlemont, to preside;" the fact being, that the venerable General was understood to have small liking for the religious-equality principle which was now in the ascendant in Belfast politics. The grand review was followed by a grand procession, with *feux de joie*, and emblematic devices, with mottos appropriate to the occasion.* After the procession, there was a grand assembly of citizens and citizen-soldiers, to the number of six thousand, in the Linen-Hall; when they voted unanimously an address to the National Assembly of France, full of that "affectionate fraternity of heart which ought to unite man with man, and nation with nation, in one great republic of the

* Such as "A figure of Hibernia, one hand and foot in shackles—a Volunteer presenting to her a figure of Liberty. MORRO: *For a people to be FREE, it is sufficient that they WILL it.*" Another was, a portrait of Mirabeau, with the motto, "*Our Gallic Brother was born in 1732; alas! we are still in embryo.*"

world." The addressers "auspicate happiness and glory to the human race;" "success to the armies of France," as "the advanced guard of the world;" "freedom and prosperity to the people of France," (with an intimation of regret that "a rash opposition to the irresistible will of the public had, in some instances, *maddened a disposition otherwise mild and magnanimous, and turned energy into ferocity*")—and "long life and happiness to the King of the French" (who was guillotined just six months afterwards). They likewise voted, all but unanimously—some stiff-necked Presbyterians of the Haliday, Bruce, and Charlemont school still "doubting as to the expediency, though agreeing in the principle"—an address to the people of Ireland, with a strong religious-equality paragraph. The day ended, according to our joyous and jovial Head-Pacifcator, with—

"Dinner at the Donegal Arms—*Everybody as happy as a King—Huzza! God bless everybody!*—Stanislaus Augustus!—GEORGE WASHINGTON!—*Beau jour*—Home, God knows how or when—Huzza!—*God bless everybody again, generally—Bed, with THREE TIMES THREE—Sleep at last.*"

This Fourteenth-July commemoration—rather, the European events which it celebrated, the sympathies which it cemented, the aspirations which it fostered, and the changed relations of religious parties which it indicated, produced a potent effect on the Catholics of Ireland. It made them less Catholic and more Irish. It matured among them that democratic spirit and power whose rise and earlier progress we have already noted, and whose further movements we are now to trace. In this spirit they elected their Convention, despite all the thunders of grand-jury denunciation, and the protestations and secession of their own prelacy and aristocracy. Of this spirit the Convention, so elected, was now to be the organ and mouthpiece. Nothing was ever more felicitously timed and circumstanced than this Catholic Convention. When its sittings commenced (2nd of December, 1792) the government was at its weakest, and the nation at its strongest. Dumourier was driving the Prussians before him out of France; the funds were coming down, as every post brought tidings of some new success of the arms of Republican France, enhancing the probabilities of a speedy beginning of that war which all men saw must begin, sooner or later; the Irish ministry were paralysed, and could not interfere—the British minister was prudent, and would not. Events had, for once, given the Catholics of Ireland everything their own way—and they knew it: it was their first chance for centuries, and they improved it; the victims of the Penal Code had got a voice in the world at last—and they spoke.

On the very first meeting of the new Catholic parliament, it was clear that old things had passed away. No longer the self-appointed agents of a despised and degraded caste, meeting in holes and corners, existing on sufferance and breathing by connivance—but the publicly-elected delegates and spokesmen of three millions of people—they at once discarded their old slavish ways of doing business, and went to the work of their emancipation with the energy and boldness of men who were self-emancipated already. Their first act was to prepare a *petition to the King*, praying, not for any elective franchise, corporate privilege, or other such special "boon," but for JUSTICE—simple, absolute, and immediate. Not without much hesitation and delay, and dubious pondering of expediences and possibilities, was the thing done—but done it was, unanimously and by acclamation.

"We have been asked," said a member, "*what shall we do in case of a refusal?* I will not, when I look round me, suppose a refusal. But, if such an event should take place, our duty is obvious. *We are to tell our constituents; and they, not we, are to determine.* We will take the sense of the whole people, and see what *they* will have done."*

The petition to the King being agreed on, the next question was *the mode of transmitting it*. Through what channel should they send their petition? Again the answer was ready, after a while, after more of hesitation, delay, and doubt:—"TAKE your petition to the King: if you would have your business done, go—if not, *send*." It was a bold measure. It was quite without a precedent—all previous Irish Catholic addresses to royalty having been transmitted (or left *untransmitted*) through Dublin Castle. It was a vote of censure on his Majesty's Irish advisers. It was a declaration of want of confidence in the Viceroy and the vice-regal administration. It was, in fact, refusing to recognise the existence of the government which had, for a century past, refused to recognise their existence. Everything was done that Dublin Castle could do, to avert the blow. "Influential individuals" were given to understand, that if the petition were sent through the usual channel, the Irish ministry would instantly despatch it by express, and back it with the strongest recommendations. At first the Convention wavered. It was agreed that they should *wait half an hour*, for the result of one more interview between the Castle people and the influential individuals. Wonderfully were the times and the men changed! "The very men," says Tone, "who, a few months before, could not obtain an answer at the Castle, sat with their watches in their hands, minuting that government which had repelled them with disdain." The answer not coming in time, and not proving satisfactory when it did come, the Convention voted, without more waiting, that the petition should go direct to Majesty; and five of their body were appointed as delegates to go to London, and see it safely lodged in Majesty's hands.

The five delegates—Edward Byrne, John Keogh, Christopher Dillon Bellew, James Edward Devereux, and Sir Thomas French, with Tone to accompany them as secretary—fitly represented the power which commissioned them. Another bold measure was soon forthcoming, to *overawe* Dublin Castle yet more completely, and administer wholesome suggestion to the meditations of the British Minister. As there was no packet-boat ready for sailing in Dublin harbour, it occurred to the delegates that they might as well take their journey *by way of Belfast*; which would afford a convenient opportunity for strengthening the union of Irishmen, and renewing their vows of fraternisation with their Protestant Dissenting friends in the north. Accordingly, to Belfast they went; and at Belfast they were received in a way which fully justified their expectations, and which could not be without its effect on ministerial opinion. On their departure, the horses were taken from their carriage; they were drawn to the place of embarkation by the Protestant Dissenting people, and sent on their way rejoicing, with Protestant acclamations ringing in their ears. It seemed dreadfully imprudent in our delegates, thus to mix themselves up with men who were notoriously out of favour with the constituted authorities; nothing could be more calculated to "embarrass his Majesty's go-

* Tone's "Memoirs," vol. i., p. 108.

vernment." But the Catholics of Ireland had served their apprenticeship in the great political lesson, that ministerial embarrassment is the short and sure way to popular success. "*Let our delegates,*" it was said, "*if they are refused, return by the same route.*"

On the arrival of the deputation in London, their first business was to acquaint the Home Secretary (Mr. Dundas) with the object of their mission, and to request the naming of a day and hour when they might wait on him with a copy of their petition, for royal perusal before delivery. An appointment was made accordingly; the delegates met the Minister; a long conversation ensued; they were heard with particular attention, and bowed out with abundant politeness. Still there was a difficulty. The secretary wished to break the fall of the government in Ireland. *He* would take charge of the petition, and deliver it safely into the royal hands. But the delegates were firm: they had not come all that way—round by Belfast, too—for the pleasure of seeing Mr. Secretary Dundas: diplomacy on the one side was met by doggedness on the other. At length the Minister was obliged to concede the point (honest Earl Moira having promised that, if necessary, he, as a peer, would ask an audience of the Sovereign, and introduce the deputation himself), and on Wednesday, the 2nd of January, 1793, the five delegates were PRESENTED AT ST. JAMES'S, by Mr. Dundas, with the regular forms, and, with their own hands, delivered into the King's own hands the humble petition of his Majesty's three millions of Catholic subjects in Ireland. They made a "splendid appearance," says their secretary, "and met with what is called, in the language of courts, a *most gracious reception.*"

Before leaving England, the delegates obtained a farewell audience of the Minister, in order to learn, if they could, his intentions, and to acquaint him once more, and once for all, with those of the Catholic people of Ireland. The interview did not absolutely satisfy them, and yet they did not exactly see cause for being dissatisfied. Great plainness of speech on their part, almost amounting to an intimation of the conditional and contingent quality of Irish Catholic allegiance, was met by due official caution and "delicacy" on the side of the Secretary of State. He was careful, as is the way with Secretaries of State, to avoid "committing himself" to particulars; yet his generalities were pleasant to hear; and he even went the length of assuring the deputation that "his Majesty was sensible of their loyalty and attachment to the principles of the constitution—that, in consequence, *they should be recommended in the speech from the throne* at the opening of the impending session—and that ministers in England *desired approbation and support from them only in proportion to the measure of relief afforded.*" The assurance was not, in point of definiteness, quite what they could have wished; yet it was perhaps more than they might have expected from the dignity and reserve of ministerial diplomacy—and at any rate it was all that could be got. Putting all things together—the gracious royal reception, with the fair-seeming ministerial assurances—the delegates conceived that they could not do else than vote the result of their mission "*satisfactory.*"

Here, for the present, we leave the Irish Catholics and their ambassadors in enjoyment of the gracious reception and the satisfactory assurances—the hard-earned reward of one of the best-timed and most happily managed agitations that history has to show. How far the satisfactory prospect was

realised in a satisfactory result, we shall learn in a future chapter. Meanwhile, things looked well. The Irish Papists had found their way to court; they had breathed the air of Whitehall and St. James's; they had seen the King and talked with the Minister; they had appealed from the tyranny of domestic legislation to the Caesar of the imperial crown, and their appeal had been graciously received. On the whole, the Irish Papists seemed in a fair way to get their existence recognised by the constitution, and their right to breathe duly provided for by act of parliament.

CHAPTER VII.

SESSION OF 1793—IRISH PAPISTS AT DUBLIN CASTLE—NEGOCIATION, CONCESSION, AND COERCION—THE SECRET COMMITTEE—THE LAST OF THE VOLUNTEERS—GUNPOWDER AND CONVENTION BILLS—ULTERIOR VIEWS.

MR. SECRETARY DUNDAS kept his word. On the 10th of January, 1793, the Lord-Lieutenant opened parliament in Dublin, with a speech containing the following "conciliation" paragraph:—

"I have it in particular command from his Majesty to recommend it to you, to apply yourselves to the consideration of such measures as may be most likely to *strengthen and cement a general union of sentiment among all classes and descriptions of his Majesty's subjects*, in support of the established constitution." With this view, his Majesty trusts *that the situation of his Majesty's Catholic subjects will engage your serious attention*, and in the consideration of this subject he relies on the *wisdom and liberality* of his parliament."

The Irish Papists, then, had not been at St. James's for nothing. They had moved the British minister—to move the Crown—to move the Irish minister—to move parliament, to recant its ascendancy resolutions of the previous session; to grant, without more words, the claims which, the year before, it had refused to listen to, even to the extent of letting an humble petition lie quietly on the table; to set at nought the protestations, and addresses, and menaces of corporations and grand juries, headed by Commons' Speakers and Lord Chancellors, and to admit the three millions of Popish outlaws within the pale of the Protestant constitution. The parliament of College-Green was now under orders from Dublin Castle and St. James's to surrender at discretion to the parliament of Back-Lane.

At the commencement of this session of 1793, all looked well for the Catholics of Ireland. They were in a position to carry everything their own way. They had but to ask with sufficient boldness and pertinacity, and they were sure of receiving. The government was completely paralysed; much hurt, and still more frightened. The Prussians had been swept out of France; Dumourier was in Brabant, with Holland undefended before him, and London not so remote but that the contingency of invasion came within the range of possibilities, and was worthy of ministerial consideration; public credit tottered; the funds were falling; the popular cry for Reform was rising; war was plainly inevitable and near; all

the elements of ministerial "embarrassment" had collected themselves into one dense and formidable mass of all-but insurmountable difficulty—and the allegiance of three millions of people in Ireland was not to be lightly hazarded. It was no time to stand upon consistency: Protestant ascendancy, though a good thing in its way, was scarcely worth the price of an Irish rebellion on the eve of a European war. Accordingly, this session of 1793 began as no Irish parliamentary session had ever begun before; with large promises and unbounded professions on the part of government, and even with performances, at the amplitude of which (judging by comparison with the past) the Whig Opposition were fairly carried off their feet with astonishment and delight. Place bills, pension bills, responsibility bills—which, session after session for some seven years, the Opposition had been hopelessly fighting for, in the face of thundering majorities—were now frankly accepted, and brought forward as government measures. The Opposition could now scarcely propose a thing without being agreeably surprised by the intelligence that his Majesty's ministers had, or soon would have, a bill of their own ready that would answer the purpose better. Even in such a matter as the amending and liberalising of the law of libel, Mr. Grattan found himself forestalled by his Majesty's Attorney-General, who politely requested that *his* measure might be allowed the precedence. The question of parliamentary reform itself was surrendered, without a division and without a debate. Parliament had not sat five days before the House of Commons came to an unanimous vote to form itself, on an early day, into a committee of the whole house, to inquire into the state of the representation.

Thus passed off the first parliamentary week of the year 1793, in the pleasantest way imaginable. Everything that anybody proposed for the good of the country was unanimously agreed to by both sides of the house. Opposition took holiday; there was, in truth, nothing to oppose, the ministry was so reasonable and complaisant. "Country gentlemen," says Hardy, "could scarcely believe their ears or their eyes; such deeds, or rather, such professions of high parliamentary emprise, seemed to carry them back to the days of antique chivalrous patriotism. 'Whence does all this benignity flow?' said Lord Charlemont, at this time, to the author of these memoirs; 'I doubt very much if *Monsieur Dumourier* ever heard of a parliamentary reform, and yet I am almost tempted to suspect him of having some share in what is now going forward,'"^{*} The Whig lord's suspicion was shrewd and sagacious; and it would have been wise in all Whigs, Papists, and others interested in ministerial embarrassment, to improve, without loss of time, their own and Monsieur Dumourier's good fortune. It was a beautiful and pleasant beginning this, of the session of 1793; but might it not turn out *too good to last*?

Meanwhile, how was the Catholic question going on? The demand had been for justice—the justice of total, immediate, and unconditional emancipation; the promise had been of large and liberal concession—Catholic gratitude and support were to be commensurate with the amount of relief afforded. At what rate was performance proceeding?

Great is the force of use and wont. It is said that negro insurrections in our sugar islands, during the old days of slavery (the story has good au-

^{*} "Memoirs of the Earl of Charlemont," vol. ii., p. 304.

cient classical parallels) have been put down by the mere sight of *the overseer with his whip*, when the ordinary military appliances of sabre and musket have been tried and found wanting; the blacks could stand fire, and fancy themselves men and soldiers—but the sight of the whip reminded them they were only slaves after all, and revived, by irresistible law of association, the suspended animation of the slave instinct of passive obedience. And we remember it was slanderously rumoured, some years since (this must have been a calumny), of our brave countrymen the British Legion in Spain, that on one critical occasion they forgot their wonted gallantry and were seized with panic, when confronted with certain Carlist Blues, the colour of whose uniforms is said to have brought back, especially among the new recruits, painful reminiscences of the London police, and made them fancy themselves for the moment in the streets of the British metropolis. Something of this kind was the experience of our Irish Papists, in this month of January, 1793. They had borne themselves bravely at Whitehall and St. James's; they had looked unabashed on royalty, and said their say at the Home-office, and baffled ministerial finesse with bold blunt speaking. In London they behaved like men, but when they returned home they became Irish Papists again. On sight of their old masters, the old feeling of servitude came creeping once more over the half-emancipated slaves of the Penal Code. After having extorted the principle from the British ministry, they could not, for lack of self-respect and self-possession, negotiate details with their own provincial rulers; and they lost in Dublin Castle the better part of what they had gained at St. James's.* Up to this point they had done admirably; they had not faltered nor tripped once. They had demanded everything, and conceded nothing; they had been peremptory and unaccommodating, both in the substance and the tone of their application, and they had found the peremptory and unaccommodating way of doing business answer best; and now, in the moment of their greatest strength and of their enemies' greatest weakness, in the very height of the government panic, they more than half failed, simply because they could not say over again in Dublin what they had said in London.

The session had not proceeded many days before it became necessary for the Irish Cabinet to settle what, precisely, in quantity and quality, should be the measure of emancipation conceded in answer to the Catholic petition. They accordingly opened a negotiation with the leading and managing men of the Convention: and from the hour that this negotiation began, the Catholic spirit fell, and the Catholic cause lost ground. The Catholics ought to have had nothing to do with negotiating: it was precisely the one thing which they did not understand. It was completely changing their position. Negotiation meant compromise; abandonment of the ground of right; willingness to accept a part, and call it the whole. To begin negotiating was to make the entire business a thing no longer of principle, but of details—some essential, others non-essential, the most

* "It is remarkable," says the editor of Tone's Memoirs, "and belongs, perhaps, to an innate principle of human nature, that the Catholic leaders displayed much more spirit in pleading their cause amongst strangers, and before the monarch himself, than when they had to settle the terms of that relief already granted with those subordinate ministers of his, before whose insolence and oppression they had bent so long in submission. They then seemed to recognise that frown to which they had been accustomed."

disputable—all open to discussion and diplomacy. The Catholics were bad diplomatists. They could, on an emergency, defy their masters at the Castle (as they had already done in taking their petition to London), but they could not sit down and talk coolly on business with them. They were never at their ease in such colloquies; the feeling of freedom and equality was wanting. In the very first interview they had with the Irish Secretary (Mr. Hobart) they put on the list of non-essentials—definitively gave up—the *right to sit in Parliament*. Pretty well for a beginning! Tone says, in his Journals (21st January)—

“In the Sub-Committee, Sir T. French, Byrne, Keogh, and M. Donnell despatched to Hobart, to apprise him that ‘nothing short of unlimited emancipation will satisfy the Catholics.’ They return in about an hour, extremely dissatisfied with each other; and, after divers mutual recriminations, it appears, by the confession of all parties, that, so far from discharging their commission, they had done directly the reverse: for the result of their conversation with the secretary was, that he had declared explicitly against the whole measure, and they had given him reason, in consequence, to think that the Catholics would acquiesce contentedly in a half one. * * *

“Agreed by the Sub-Committee that a letter should be written to Hobart to rectify this mistake; which is done accordingly, after many alterations. It is not well done after all; for, instead of putting the question on the true ground, it only says that his Majesty’s gracious intentions towards the Catholics cannot be fulfilled, unless by the repeal of the penal laws. I wanted to express it a great deal stronger, and to hint at the danger of trifling, but was overpowered. * * * A sneaking spirit of compromise seems creeping in, which, if not immediately checked, may be fatal.” *

The sneaking spirit of compromise had crept in but too effectually, and was not now to be exorcised. The experienced diplomatists of the Castle saw their advantage, and kept it. That one hour’s talk had undone the best part of the work of six months. The minister breathed freely again; the panic was over; he saw there was no need of being in a hurry; delay was not dangerous,—perhaps he had said already more than he need have said. The whole aspect of the business was changed. The question now was no longer, whether to emancipate or not, with civil war contingent on the answer; but, how small a measure of concession *might do* as a “boon,” in lieu of emancipation. The problem for ministerial solution now was, to discover the *minimum* of relief, which the Catholic leaders might be cajoled into accepting as better than nothing. Accordingly, the ministerial policy was, from this time, to procrastinate; to start difficulties, insinuate doubts, and suggest objections, and make as many open “questions of detail” as might be, while “entirely agreeing in the abstract principle;” to discourage the Catholics, without irritating or violently disappointing them; in a word, to *take them quietly down*—and, at the same time, to be prepared for the *ultima ratio* of an appeal to physical force. The policy was sagaciously conceived and ably executed. The question dragged wearily on, from day to day and week to week; while Catholic courage was cooling, Catholic zeal declining, Catholic hope turning into heart-sickness, and Catholic union breaking up into party jealousies and suspicions. On the 24th of January our zealous and honest Catholic Secretary writes—

“Sir T. French opens the business (of the Sub-Committee) by a strong attack on the meeting for the lukewarm spirit which they have manifested for these last few

days. I am very glad of this step, which, indeed, I put the baronet upon. *Sweathman's* paper,* with my amendments, brought in, read, and received coldly enough.

"This is hard! They have now a noble opportunity of punishing their old enemy Fitzgibbon, and I am afraid they will let it slip. It is objected to on two grounds: 1st, as an attack on the privileges of parliament; and, 2nd, inasmuch as being *below their dignity to enter into an altercation with the Chancellor*. The last is most insisted upon, the first appearing to savour a little of timidity. The fact is they *are* afraid. They were much stouter three months ago, when they were, beyond all comparison, weaker. Now they have, I may say, the whole North, the sanction of the King's name, and their own party in the highest spirits and most anxious expectations,—and all of a sudden they are gone unaccountably backward. *This is vile. It will give our execrable government time to recollect themselves.* They are now rocking to their very foundation, and they are still more frightened than hurt. We are going to take them very kindly out of this panic, and, by the fluctuation and indecision of our counsels, to show them that they have nothing to fear from us. The intended paper is at length got rid of by referring it to those who are called our *parliamentary friends*. I never knew good come through that channel."†

The "strong attacks" and protestations were, however, unavailing. Once for all, the Catholics had made a fatal mistake, in negotiating when they might have dictated, and there was now no help for it. While they blundered and boggled with their negotiations, the government was preparing to coerce, should need be. Already had advantage been taken of the gratitude and good humour of the Whig Opposition, to drive through parliament, with the utmost rapidity, *army and militia bills*, with other measures calculated to strengthen the hands of ministers; and Catholic loyalty was every day becoming less and less important. Before parliament had sat one month, it had come to be a matter of the least possible consequence to a strong government whether the Catholics were conciliated or not; and yet the negotiations were still in their preliminary stage.

"It is not necessary," says Tone, "nor could it now be useful, to detail these various combats, in which the same ground was fought over again and again, with equal obstinacy and the same success. It may suffice to give the substance of one debate, as a specimen:—

"During the progress of the bill, the minister having sent for the gentlemen appointed to communicate with him, informed them that *he could not pretend to answer for the success of the bill, unless he was enabled, from authority, to reply to a question proposed to him by a noble lord in debate, 'Whether the Catholics would be satisfied with the measure of relief intended?'* By 'satisfied' he meant that *the public mind should not be irritated in the manner it had been for some time back*; he did not mean to say that future applications might not be made; but *if they (the Catholics) would not for the present be satisfied, it were better to make a stand here than to concede, and thereby to give them strength, by which they might be able farther to embarrass the administration—perhaps next session.* This was pretty strong language from the minister (Secretary Hobart), and very unlike what he had held at the opening of the session; but *the aspect of the political hemisphere had been materially altered in that short space.* The very night before this interview, the House of Commons had voted an *army of twenty thousand, and a militia of sixteen thousand men*; a measure in which the opposition party had outrun the hopes, and almost the wishes of the administration. Every measure for strengthening the hands of government was adopted by one party with even more eagerness than it was proposed by the other; the nation submitted implicitly to the good pleasure of the minister, and the leader of opposition was contented, in terms, to implore the gratuitous clemency of the man to whom he could have dictated the law; a mode of proceeding that seems to have been more sentimental than wise, as the subsequent measures of the administration aban-

* This was "a strong address to the nation, to show ministers that we are as resolute as ever." It was also a vindication of the Catholics and their Convention against some recent abusive attacks of the Lord Chancellor (Fitzgibbon).

† Tone's "Memoirs," vol. ii., p. 423.

damely verified. Government was invested with dictatorial powers; to what purpose they were exerted posterity may safely, and will impartially determine. But to return.

"The deputation having reported the speech of the Secretary, a very warm debate ensued in the sub-committee, which, it may be necessary to repeat, then comprised a great portion of the spirit and ability of the general committee. The question was, "whether they would accede to the wish of the minister, and, by admitting their satisfaction at the present bill, sanction a measure short of complete emancipation?"*

Of this warm debate, the product was a cold and cautious

"*Compromise*.—The deputation again saw the minister, and, with a nice distinction, they refused, in the name of the body, to express the wished-for satisfaction; they refused to express it officially as members of the sub-committee, but, as individuals of the Catholic body, they admitted that the bill did contain '*substantial relief*,' and even this admission was guarded with a stipulation that it should not be quoted in debate. But the minister had ascertained all that he wished to know, by the proposal; he saw that the Catholics *would acquiesce in a measure short of complete relief*; and he inferred that they would not risk the safety of their bill by opposition to any measures, however repugnant to their own feelings, or subversive of the general interest; and the whole process of the session justified his sagacity. The expression of satisfaction was therefore no longer required, and the bill proceeded in the usual forms."†

The result of all this negotiating and compromising was, that a bill passed both Houses of Parliament with little opposition,‡ and ultimately (9th of April) received the royal assent, which, while it did give the Catholics very real, substantial, and considerable relief, yet fell far short of what they had expected, and of what they might have achieved had they gone on as they began. Catholic industry and property were completely emancipated from the restraints and burdens of the Penal Code; the army and navy, the university, the jury, the magistracy, and the corporations were opened to them (*i.e.*, as regards the last, by law, *not in fact*); and to these was added the elective franchise, which was destined ultimately (at Clare election, thirty-five years afterwards) to accomplish the rest. The houses of parliament, the shrievalty, and the high offices of state were still withheld. In itself, the measure was unquestionably a valuable and important one: yet it fell so far below the high and just expectations of the Catholics; it was so lame and impotent a conclusion to a most hopeful and magnificent beginning; it was so little in the spirit of the debates in the Convention and the mission of the delegates to London, that the boon excited little gratitude—as little as it deserved. The Catholic leaders were dissatisfied with the government, with one another, and with themselves; and the Catholic people were dissatisfied with the government and with their leaders likewise. The favourable crisis was gone—never to come again while Ireland was a nation. They had had the ball at their feet, and they had let it roll past them.

There was deep and dexterous policy in Mr. Pitt's management of this Catholic question of 1793. Enough was given to take off the edge of popular discontent, to thin the ranks of disaffection, and save Ireland to the empire; yet what was given was so given as to damp the people's confidence in themselves and their leaders, depress the tone of popular feeling, and break the strength of any new popular movement. The patriots, Ca-

* Tone's "Memoirs," vol. i., pp. 130-132.

† *Ibid.*, vol. i., 134-5.

‡ It is not without interest that we find the name of the Honourable Lieutenant ARTHUR WELLESLEY, member for the borough of Trim, in the debates on this bill. "The Duke" spoke his maiden speech in favour of concession to "our Roman Catholic fellow-subjects."

tholic and Protestant, had lost some of their very best grievances; but, at the same time, they had not any great and glorious triumph to point to, as an incentive to renewed agitation for the removal of the remainder. The Catholic people were not satisfied with the measure of 1793; neither were they so dissatisfied as to be in a mood for more agitation. They simply *sulked*; gave a grudging obedience to the law and constitution which had made a grudging recognition of the fact of their existence, and desisted from political agitation, with their grievances half redressed—wearied, disappointed, and out of heart. The bill divided the Catholic body; it favoured their democracy at the expence of their aristocracy; the great mass of the Catholics of Ireland—the industrious and commercial classes—were now relieved of all serious practical grievances pressing on them, specially *as Catholics*, while their nobility and gentry still remained under sentence of exclusion from all the higher objects of political ambition. The Catholic aristocracy were now, practically, the only unenfranchised portion of their community, and the disabilities to which they continued subjected were not of a sort to elicit any very lively sympathies from the peasantry and traders of the sect. This measure of 1793 was a well-aimed blow, too, at the union of Protestant and Catholic Irishmen. It tended to detach from that union the Catholic masses; leaving the Dissenters to complain that they were deserted and betrayed by those whom they had so efficiently helped to their rights—that they had done the work and fought the battle, and others reaped the spoils of victory; and so leaving the government at liberty and leisure to assail the originators of the once so formidable confederacy of United Irishmen. And finally—a capital point of Pitt's policy—it *weakened the Irish government*; exhibited the Irish legislature in a light at once odious and contemptible; showed that legislature to be what it truly was—at once tyrannical and cowardly—ready to grant unanimously, one session, that which, the session before, it had almost unanimously refused with contumely. It detached the allegiance of the Catholic population from the independent domestic parliament, which had refused while it dared, and conceded only when it must, and attracted that allegiance towards the central imperial power which had interfered to administer the needed compulsion. The Catholics were now taught to put their trust, not in Irish parliaments, but in British cabinets. The actual result—in all probability, the deliberately and sagaciously designed result of this whole business of 1793—was to convey to the mind of Catholic Ireland the impression, that the true corrective for the tyranny of a native parliament lay in the impartial beneficence and over-ruling supremacy of the British crown, that justice to Ireland was to be sought and found, not in Dublin, but in the court above at Westminster. The history of the question of the legislative Union, seven years later, shows that the British minister had, on the whole, calculated correctly. In the popular agitation consequent on the introduction of that measure, the Catholics took no very prominent part: they were, to a great extent, quiescent, and in part friendly to the views of government.*

* The following account of Mr. Pitt's Irish Catholic policy errs, perhaps, in the way of overdoing this theory of ministerial intention—attributing everything to policy and calculation, where much must have been the mere result of circumstances; but it is, we believe, essentially correct:—

“The wily minister of our sister country encouraged the Catholics when they were weak, then doubted his ability to perform what he had given them reason to expect,

With this Catholic Relief Bill, the business of conciliation was finished, and that of coercion began. The fair promises of the opening week of the session had done their work—of throwing dust in the eyes of the “honourable gentlemen opposite”—and it was now time to proceed to business. The ministerial adoption of certain small “constitutional” measures (place and pension bills, and the like), special favourites with the Whigs—measures which were all very well so far as they went, but of no manner of practical value while other things stood as they were—had served the purpose of disarming the hostility and lulling the suspicions of the Opposition; had created for the Government a fictitious political capital of character and credit, sufficient to carry them through all immediate difficulties—and it was no longer necessary (the ghost of the three millions being laid) to be at the pains of keeping up appearances. The gentlemen of the Opposition, in the innocence of their hearts, had returned the compliment of the minister’s adoption of their small pet measures, by strengthening the hands of government with a new loan, new taxes, new soldiers, a militia bill, an emigrant bill, and other such strong measures—and only discovered, when it was too late, that the interchange of civilities was not intended to be perfectly reciprocal. It is almost superfluous to say, that the unanimous resolution of the House of Commons, in the first week of the session, in favour of parliamentary reform, was without practical result. The whole thing seems to have been, on the part of the ministry, nothing better than a hoax. Twice was the subject mooted (in February) by the Whigs, nothing doubting of ministerial support; but it was too late. The supplies were already voted; the army and militia were secured for that year; *the French were driven out of Flanders*; and the Committee of the whole House on the state of the representation began and ended its labours with voting that—“Under the present system of representation, the privileges of the people, the trade and prosperity of the country, have greatly increased; and that, *if any plan be produced, likely to increase these advantages, and not hazard what we already possess, it ought to be taken into the most serious consideration.*” We need not say that the likelihood of increased advantages was never made out to the satisfaction of the ministerial mind.

Things were fast ripening, meanwhile, for an attack on the Reformers and Republicans of the north. The first overt act of a directly coercive character was the work of the House of Lords. At an early period of the session, the Lords, on Fitzgibbon’s prompting, appointed a SECRET COMMITTEE, with extensive and searching inquisitorial powers—professedly, to “inquire into the causes of the disorders and disturbances which prevailed in several parts of the kingdom;” really, to implicate the leading Catholic agitators in the crimes of the Defenders, and to show cause, or make cause, for *putting down the Volunteers*, who had recently exhibited signs of new life, and given dangerous indications of being inoculated

advised them to apply to their own parliament, resisted their pretensions there, and at length brought all parties to depend upon royal favour, as the only source of relief from domestic oppression. In this manner he carried off the glory of the measure, and insidiously endeavoured to attach the Catholics to the throne; dictated to parliament, and rendered the cabinet of St. James’s a court of appeal paramount to the legislature of Ireland.”—See “Belfast Politics; a Collection of Debates, Resolutions, and other proceedings of that Town, in the years 1792 and 1793,” Preface, p. ix.

with French principles and sympathies. This Secret Committee went to work in the genuine Star-Chamber spirit; examining suspected persons, on oath, on the opinions and actions of themselves and others, and fining and imprisoning at pleasure all who demurred to their authority or hesitated in obeying their mandates.* In due time they were ready with their report, in which, while charitably exonerating the general body of the Catholics from any direct participation in Defenderism, they insinuated that there was something suspicious about the relations of certain of the Catholic leaders in Dublin to the Defender Associations, and that a portion of the funds of the Catholic Convention had been secretly employed in fomenting the Defender disturbances. They laid great stress on the circumstance that Mr. John Sweetman, a member of the Sub-Committee, had written a letter to somebody, alluding to something which he had done, or caused to be done, with a view to procure legal advice for a Catholic gentleman committed to gaol on a charge of Defenderism—thus proclaiming the atrocious doctrine, that contribution for the legal defence of a person accused involves participation in a crime, before the fact of the crime itself has been judicially proved. The reply of the Catholics was an offer of submitting the whole of their proceedings and accounts to public scrutiny. The part of the committee's report, most productive of immediate and important consequences, runs thus:—

"An unusual ferment has for some months past disturbed several parts of the north, particularly the town of Belfast, and the county of Antrim. It is kept up and encouraged by seditious papers and pamphlets, of the most dangerous tendency, printed at very cheap and inconsiderable rates in Dublin and Belfast, which issue almost daily from certain societies of men, or clubs, in both those places, calling themselves 'committees' under various descriptions, and keeping up a constant correspondence with each other. These publications are circulated among the people with the utmost industry, and appear to be calculated to defame the government and parliament, and to render the people dissatisfied with their condition, and with the laws. *The conduct of the French is shamefully extolled, and recommended to the public view as an example for imitation.* Hopes and expectations have been held up of their assistance, by a descent upon this kingdom, and prayers have been offered up at Belfast, from the pulpit, for the success of their arms, in the presence of military associations which have been newly levied and arrayed in that town. A body of men have associated themselves in Dublin, under the title of the '*First National Battalion.*' *Their uniform is copied from the French—green turned up with white, white waistcoat, and striped trowsers, gilt buttons impressed with a harp and letters importing 'First National Battalion: no crown, but a device on the harp, of a cap of liberty upon a pike.* Several bodies of men have been collected in different parts of the north, armed and disciplined under officers chosen by themselves, and composed mostly of the lowest classes of the people. These bodies are daily increasing in numbers and force. They have exerted their best endeavours to procure military men of experience to act as their officers, some of them having expressly stated that there were men enough to be had, but that officers were what they wanted. *Stands of arms and gunpowder, to a very large amount, much above the common consumption, have been sent, within these few months past, to Belfast and Newry, and orders given for a much greater quantity, which it appears could be wanted only for military operations.* At Belfast *bodies of men in arms are drilled and exercised for several hours almost every night, by candle-light; and attempts have been made to seduce the soldiery, which, much to the honour of the king's forces, have proved ineffectual.* The declared object of these military bodies is to procure a Reform of Parliament; but the obvious intention of most of them appears to be to overawe the parliament and the government, and to dictate to both. * * * The

* See, in Madden's "United Irishmen," vol. ii., p. 329, &c., the case of Simon Butler and Oliver Bond—imprisoned for six months, and fined five hundred pounds each, for entertaining legal doubts as to the competency of the committee to administer an oath and ask criminating questions.

result of the inquiries of the committee is that, in their opinion, *it is incompatible with the public safety and tranquillity of this kingdom, to permit bodies of men in arms to assemble when they please, without any legal authority; and that the existence of a self-created representative body, of any description of the king's subjects, taking upon itself the government of them, and levying taxes or subscriptions to be applied at the discretion of such representative bodies, or of persons deputed by them, is also incompatible with the public safety and tranquillity."*

This report—the work of Fitzgibbon, and to be accepted, therefore, not without limitations—was made early in March, 1793. It was speedily followed up by active coercive measures, administrative and legislative.

The opportunity was favourable. The Catholics were divided among themselves, prostrate at the feet of government, in anxious and doubting expectation of a "boon," conscious that the kind and degree of such boon were contingent on their good behaviour; moderate people were alarmed, and monied and aristocratic people exasperated, at the horrors of the French Revolution; the exigencies of war (which had already commenced) seemed to justify a vigour beyond the law; the Liberal Opposition had been so liberal as to supply men and money for the largest needs of a vigorous administration; and the government were of opinion, putting all thing together, that the time was come for strong measures against the northern reformers and republicans. The first thing to be done was *to put an end to the Volunteers*, whose recently indicated sympathies with France made them more than ever odious to the ruling powers. The blow was soon struck in the following

"PROCLAMATION,

"BY THE LORD LIEUTENANT AND COUNCIL OF IRELAND.

"Whereas it appears, by the Report from the Lords' Committee appointed to inquire into the causes of the disorders and disturbances which prevail in several parts of this kingdom, that certain seditious and ill-affected persons in several parts of the north of this kingdom, particularly in the town of Belfast, have endeavoured to foment and encourage discontent, and, by seditious publications circulated amongst the people, and calculated to defame the government and the parliament, have endeavoured to render people dissatisfied with their condition, and with the laws:

"And whereas it appears to us, by the said report, that several bodies of men have been collected into armed associations, and have been levied and arrayed in the said town of Belfast, and that arms and gunpowder, to a very large amount, have been sent thither; that bodies of men in arms are drilled and exercised by day and by night, and that the declared object of the said armed bodies is redress of alleged grievances, but that the obvious intention of most of them appears to be to overawe the parliament and the government, and to dictate to both:

"And whereas these dangerous and seditious proceedings tend to the disturbance of the public peace, the obstruction of good order and government, to the great injury of public credit and the subversion of the constitution, and have raised great alarms in the minds of his Majesty's loyal subjects:

"Now, we, the Lord Lieutenant and Council, being determined to maintain the public peace against all attempts to disturb the same, and being desirous to forewarn all such persons as might unadvisedly incur the penalties of the law in this behalf, by concurring in practices of a tendency so dangerous and alarming, do hereby strictly charge all persons whomsoever, on their allegiance to his Majesty, to abstain from committing such offences respectively:

"And we do charge and command the magistrates, sheriffs, bailiffs, and other peace-officers, having jurisdiction within the said town of Belfast, and the several districts adjacent thereto, to be careful in preserving the peace within the same, and to disperse all seditious and unlawful assemblies; and, if they shall be resisted, to apprehend the offenders, that they may be dealt with according to law.

"Given at the council-chamber in Dublin, the 11th day of March, 1793.

"FITZGIBBON, &c. &c. &c."

Ten years before, or one year before, this proclamation would have separated Ireland from the crown of Great Britain; it now passed off quietly. One faint effort was made, at Antrim, to get up one more Volunteer review; but the troops were marched out of Belfast to prevent it (the loyalty of these troops having been already exemplified in military riots, conducted at the expense of liberal Belfast publicans and shopkeepers*)—the citizen-soldiers gave way, and there was **THE LAST OF THE VOLUNTEER ARMY OF IRELAND**. Great was the difference between 1778 and 1793. The government of Mr. Richard Heron could not protect the people from Paul Jones; the government of Lord Fitzgibbon had learned the new Anti-Jacobin doctrine of "protecting the people from themselves."

Strong administrative were supported by strong legislative measures. The opinions of the Lords' Committee on the subjects of "gunpowder" and "self-created representative bodies," were promptly expressed in acts of parliament. This session of 1793, which had begun so pleasantly and promisingly, ended with a *convention* and a *gunpowder bill*. No more Dunganon Conventions, nor Back Lane Parliaments, nor Assemblies of Delegates, Catholic, Protestant, or United, "under pretence of preparing or presenting petitions or addresses to his Majesty or to Parliament." All "assemblies, committees, or other bodies of men, elected, or otherwise constituted or appointed to represent the people of this realm, or any number or description of the same, or the people of any province, county, city, town or other district," were declared to be, thenceforth and for ever—parliament and convocation excepted—*unlawful assemblies*. No more Belfast Volunteer reviewing, exercising, and parading; no more Liberty Brigades of Artillery, with patriotic "labels on their cannons' mouths;" no more Lawyer's Corps of Grenadiers "in scarlet and gold;" that chapter in Ireland's history was for ever closed by a gunpowder bill. Ordnance, guns, pistols, gun-locks, swords, bayonets, pikes, spears, balls, gunpowder, &c. &c., could thenceforth be neither bought nor sold, imported nor exported, kept in a man's house nor removed from his house, without government licence, under penalty of fine and forfeiture. Large powers to justices of the peace to search on suspicion, ensured that the act would not be let sleep idly in the statute-book.

It is clear that we are now coming to the "beginning of the end." The peaceful, constitutional agitation had failed; and another agitation, not of the peaceful, constitutional sort, could not be far off. Already had the Rebellion of 1798 begun to shape itself in men's thoughts. On the 27th of March, 1793, the founder of the first societies of United Irishmen makes a hurried but significant entry in his diary:—

"Suppression of Belfast Volunteers—feelings of the North thereupon—probable consequences of any mishap befalling the English in the war—*ten thousand French would accomplish a separation.*"

* See "Belfast Politics." Signs of Dumourier and Franklin were especially obnoxious to military loyalty; and it went ill with a poor blind fiddler who was so unlucky as to strike up "*Ca ira.*"

CHAPTER VIII.

IRELAND IN 1793 AND 1794—THE DEFENDERS AGAIN—THE FIRST OF THE STATE TRIALS—ARCHIBALD HAMILTON ROWAN—JACKSON AND COCKAYNE—END OF THE FIRST SOCIETY OF UNITED IRISHMEN.

THE year which followed the suppression of the Volunteers, though barren of great events, gave unmistakable signs of the evil days that were coming on Ireland. The storm did not yet burst, nor did the reign of terror and torture immediately begin; but the horizon was hourly more and more overcast, the atmosphere was charged full of inflammable and explosive materials, the elements of confusion were rapidly gaining in density and volume, the seeds of every political and social mischief were growing fast and fatally up to their destined maturity. There was considerably less of "sedition" during this year than in the preceding one, and agitation was not so loud and daring as it had been; but there was more of gloomy and surly discontent—the temper of the people was turning sour—and the baneful process was in active operation which converted the demagogue of 1791 and '2 into the "muffled rebel" of 1797 and '8.

The session of 1793 left the government strong in unconstitutional powers, and flushed with the success attendant on their recent use; and the people divided among themselves, dissatisfied with their rulers and with one another, and distrustful of the efficacy of legal and peaceful agitation. Concession had failed to conciliate, because it fell short of the measure of popular expectation, and was without the grace of justice. In fact, the immediate result of the Catholic Relief Bill—valuable and important as the concessions of that bill were in themselves—was, practically, to make the condition of the Catholic people worse than before. It was easy for a strong government to dictate tolerant and liberal votes to a bribed and pensioned legislature; but it was not so easy to improve the temper of intolerance and bigotry. To make the Ethiopian change his skin is a task of proverbial difficulty. The ascendancy party, though discomfited and cast down, was not destroyed. Irritated with the government which had humbled and disgraced them, the men of the corporations and grand juries were not slow to wreak their wrath on the objects of royal and ministerial bounty; and sought to regain, by every sort of persecution which law allowed, or into which law might be twisted, the tyrannous power of which an act of parliament had, in words, deprived them. For the persecution of the statute-book was now substituted the persecution of social calumny and hatred, and perjurious legal prosecutions, aimed at the characters and lives of Catholic merchants and gentry.* The crimes of the Defenders, in which even a Lords' Secret Committee had hesitated to implicate the general body of Catholics, were now freely and sweepingly charged on the popish religion; men of character and station were dragged into assize courts, to answer indictments presented by grand-

* See, as a specimen, the case of the atrocious Protestant conspiracy against Mr. John Fay, of Navan, tried for the murder of the Rev. Mr. Butler. Plowden's "Historical Review," vol. ii., p. 441.

jury bigotry, and supported by the hired oaths of witnesses fresh from the gaols; and magistrates and country gentlemen warned the circuit judges, as they tendered their personal safety, to avoid passing through particular towns where the mass of the population happened to be Catholic.*

The Catholic peasantry reaped as little as their gentry, of practical and present good, from the act of their legislative emancipation. The franchise which that act conferred on the Catholic tenant was not his, but his landlord's—until the year 1828; and so far it was nugatory. In other respects, it was positively pernicious. The illusory religious equality now established between the two sections of the agricultural population did but exasperate a fiercer spirit of religious and social animosity—it being ever among the worst of the many curses attendant on prolonged misgovernment and oppression, that justice itself cannot be done without doing mischief. The Catholic tenant being now as useful to his landlord at elections as the Protestant tenant, the two stood on more equal terms in the land-market; the manufacture of votes might go on as prosperously with popish as with Protestant materials. The Protestant felt himself aggrieved by the intrusion of this new competitor (especially in those counties where the population was mixed in pretty equal proportions); his monopoly was invaded by the same act which wounded his pride and offended his bigotry. The consequence was, a renewal and extension of the Peep-of-Day Boy outrages, with Defender and Right-Boy outrages to match them. During the years 1793 and 1794, the feuds of the middle and lower classes of the two sects became more violent than ever. The Defenders and Right-Boys grew more daring and formidable. They assembled in large bodies by night, to learn the use of arms, and to practise military evolutions under captains whom society had outlawed into recklessness and desperation; they talked not only of tithes, taxes, rent and hearth-money, but of liberty and equality, and cutting off the heads of aristocrats; they acquired a discipline and boldness that enabled them to cope with the militia and police; and their domiciliary visitations for plunder and murder were a terror to six counties. The evil was for a while tolerated by the government and its partisans, for the sake of the uses to which it might be turned. "Unprejudiced men," says Plowden, "could not suppress their astonishment that these enormities happened under the very eyes of some right honourable gentlemen of great weight and influence, and no exertions were made to protect the peaceful subject, or to punish the lawless plunderer. Subsequent events have strengthened the suspicion that some of those gentlemen wished to see things arrive at a degree of maturity, in order to serve a most base purpose."

The political state of Ireland at this time was as gloomy as its social condition. The abortive and mischievous session of 1793 had divided and weakened the patriots—half paralysed and half exasperated them. Grattan and the Whigs, stultified by the successful chicanery of the government in winning Whig support on false pretences, had lost greatly in character; discredited and disgraced, both in parliament and out of it, they could neither resist the bad measures of administration nor moderate the violence of the popular leaders. The United Irishmen distrusted the parliamentary

* Plowden's "Historical Review," vol. ii., p. 441.

Opposition as trimmers—and the Opposition disliked and feared the United Irishmen as fanatical anarchists. The latter were fast losing ground. The prudent, the timid, and the moderate ceased to share their counsels or swell their ranks. The temporary quieting of the Catholics had deprived them of their best allies in the business of agitation; the disbanding of the Volunteers had cut off for the present all hope of successful ulterior proceedings. Since the proclamation of the 11th of March, they had lost that kind of moral force which has been defined as *physical force in perspective*: and to any other description of moral force the administration of a Fitzgibbon was impenetrable. The United Irish Societies obviously held their existence now only on the tenure of the sufferance of government, which good-naturedly let them linger on so long as their strong resolutions and eloquent addresses might be useful in furnishing matter for the consideration of the law officers of the crown: the administration which had ventured to suppress the Volunteer army, and had taken military possession of the northern metropolis of United Irish patriotism, would quite well know how to deal, when convenient, with a little knot of demagogues and agitators in Dublin. Altogether, Ireland was much changed from what it had been. The unanimity, hopefulness, and elate confidence of 1792, were no more. The United Irishmen of Dublin, in addressing Simon Butler and Oliver Bond on the termination of their six months' imprisonment (16th August, 1793), bewail bitterly the decline of the popular cause, and the decay of public spirit and virtue:—

“Gentlemen, your country is much your debtor. But we must suppose you by this time too well experienced in the mutability of public opinion to expect that she will for the present acknowledge the debt, much less return the obligation; that she will either sympathise with what you have suffered, or partake in our heartfelt joy at your enlargement. Indeed, *you will scarcely now know your country, in a few months so much altered*. Indisposed to condole or to congratulate, desponding without reason, exhausted without effort, she sits on the ground in a fit of mental alienation; unconscious of her real malady, scared at every whisper; her thousand ears open for falsehoods from abroad, her thousand eyes shut against the truth at home; worked up by false suggestions and artful insinuations to such a madness of suspicion, as makes her mistake her dearest friends for her deadliest foes, and revile the only society which ever pursued her welfare with spirit and perseverance, as attempting at her life with the torch of an incendiary and the dagger of an assassin.”

Early in 1794, the government felt itself strong enough to risk the chances of trial by jury. This year is signalised by the commencement of that series of *state prosecutions* which forms so prominent and interesting a feature in the history of the epoch whose annals we are writing. The first victim was ARCHIBALD HAMILTON ROWAN, with whom we are already acquainted as a zealous and courageous agitator; a man of the highest character, public and private, of ancient family and large fortune, and of great political and social influence. In December, 1792, the United Irish Society of Dublin, at a meeting at which Dr. Drennan was chairman, and Rowan secretary, had issued an address to the Volunteers, the purport of which was—“CITIZEN SOLDIERS, TO ARMS! To your formation was owing the peace and protection of this island, to your relaxation has been owing its relapse into impotence and insignificance, to your renovation must be owing its future freedom and its present tranquillity. We address you without any authority save that of reason; in four words lies all our power,

UNIVERSAL EMANCIPATION and REPRESENTATIVE LEGISLATURE.”* For his share, or alleged share, in distributing this “seditious libel,” Rowan was tried on an *ex-officio* information before Lord Chief Justice Clonmell and a Dublin jury, on the 29th of January, 1794 (the business having been postponed so long, to give time for a proper arrangement of the jury list), found guilty, and sentenced to two years’ imprisonment and a fine of five hundred pounds. This beginning of the State Trials was a significant specimen of the mode in which political justice was thenceforth to be dispensed in Ireland. A partisan judge,† a packed jury, and a false witness, were the ministers of justice on this occasion, as on so many others during the years that followed. One of the jury was objected to, as holding a place under the Crown; but the objection was over-ruled by the Court, on the Attorney-General observing that “it went against all that was honourable and respectable in the land;” and two others were sworn to have declared, before the trial, that “Ireland never would be quiet till Napper Tandy and Hamilton Rowan were banished or hanged.”

Rowan was imprisoned accordingly; but his residence in Newgate was of considerably shorter duration than the terms of his sentence imported. Towards the end of April, in the same year, he was further charged with the crime of high treason; having been implicated, by conversations while in prison, in the scheme of the unfortunate William Jackson for a French alliance. The charge was one which he could not safely afford to meet, and he determined on effecting his escape. The mode in which he accomplished this bold and difficult enterprise is thus related by himself, in his most interesting autobiography:—

“Messrs. Emmet, Tone, and Dowling had called on me the day I expected to have been brought before the Privy Council. I mentioned to them my plan of escape, which I had commenced, after Jackson’s arrest in the Fives Court, with Mr. Dowell, jun., the under gaoler. I told him that I had been pressed for money, and had sold a small estate, which was to have been paid for long since, but the purchaser, or rather the attorney, had started an objection, on account of my signing the deeds while in prison, by which my heirs might hereafter contest the sale; but the attorney had said also, that by an additional expense of about 50*l.* or 100*l.* the risk might be evaded; that I looked upon this as a mere cheating of the attorney; that I would rather give twice the sum to any person, and that I would consult Mr. Dowling.

“The next day was the 1st of May; I told Mr. Dowell that it had been suggested to me that he might easily assist me, if he would take me out of the prison just so long as to enable the witnesses to attest the signature being made out of the precincts of the gaol; and I declared that if he could contrive that, I should rejoice to give him the 100*l.* instead of the attorney. He said he would ask the head gaoler, and perhaps he would consent to it. I objected to this, by saying that the head gaoler might think that during the course of my imprisonment he might take the same liberty at other times, and therefore he had better not make the application. Shortly after, he asked me whether he might not tell his father; to which I immediately consented; and it was agreed that he should give me an answer. A little before dinner-hour he came and desired me to be ready at twelve o’clock. This I immediately communicated to my

* This was the occasion of Curran’s well-known “genius of universal emancipation,” perhaps the most admired and oftenest-quoted passage in modern forensic oratory.

† One instance may suffice, of the temper of this Lord Chief Justice. When it was known that the trial was preparing for the press, Lord Clonmell called on Byrne, the publisher, and said, “Take care, sir, what you do. I give you this caution; for if there are any reflections on the judges of the land, by the eternal G—, I will lay you by the heels.”—*Autobiography of Archibald Hamilton Rowan*, p. 207.

The fact is of no great consequence, still it was the fact, that, on the occasion charged in the information, the libel was not distributed by Rowan, but by a person of the name of Willie.

friend Dowling, who proposed to meet me at that hour on horseback, at the end of Sackville-street. We had a Swiss butler who had lived with us some years, to whom I laid open this part of the plan, and I directed a table to be laid out above stairs, with wine, &c., in a front two-pair-of-stairs room, the door of which commanded a view of the staircase. He was instructed, when he came to the door, to show us up stairs, and say the gentlemen had called, but they would shortly return.

"About twelve o'clock Mr. Dowell appeared in the prison, with his sabre and pistols in his girdle, and thence accompanied me to my own house. On our arrival there, the servant did as he was instructed. I then sat down with Mr. Dowell to take some refreshment; in the meantime I had prepared the purse with the hundred guineas, which I threw across the table to him, saying I was much better pleased with his having it than *six-and-eightpenny*. And here I must record that he put the purse back to me, saying he did not do it for gain; but I remonstrated, and he relented. At this moment I accused myself of my insincerity; but, as Godwin describes in Caleb Williams, under somewhat similar circumstances, I was not prepared to 'maintain my sincerity at the expense of a speedy close to my existence.'

"I then said, as we could not remain long absent, if he had no objection, I would step into the back room opposite, where my wife and eldest boy slept. To this he immediately consented; and I desired I might be called when the gentlemen returned. I entered, changed my clothes for those of my herd, who had opportunely come to town that day with a cow for the children. I then descended from the window by a knotted rope, which was made fast to the bed-post and reached down to the garden. I went to the stable, took my horse, and rode to the head of Sackville-street, where Mat Dowling had appointed to meet me. Here I was obliged to wait nearly half an hour before Dowling appeared. His delay was occasioned by some friends having called on him to supper; Mat never being the first to break up company, was obliged to remain until the party separated of themselves, lest he should be suspected of being concerned in my escape. Some of my friends advised my taking my pistols with me; but I had made up my mind not to be taken alive, so I only put a razor in my pocket. At last Dowling came up, and we set out for the house of Mr. Sweetman, who was a friend of his, and lived on the sea-side at Sutton, near Baldoyle, by whom, and his wife, I was received with the utmost kindness; and in a short time afterwards Dowling returned home.

"As soon as day broke, Mr. Sweetman set out for Rush, in hope of procuring a smuggling boat that would take me to France. On his arrival there, he found the place in great confusion, for Mr. Dowell, with a military party, was searching several of the houses; but there were two in particular, in either of which he expected to find me, as they belonged to some persons who had been confined in Newgate, and had frequently dined with me; but they had been released, as it was only for some revenue affair they were in confinement. Mr. Dowell, however, immediately suspected them to have sheltered me, and was then searching their houses. Thus disappointed at Rush, Mr. Sweetman said he thought I might be secreted somewhere in Ireland; but I persisted in my wish to get to France. He then asked me whether I would risk myself in a little fishing wherry of his, which lay moored close to his house. This I accepted willingly, if any person not in my situation would attempt the same risk. He replied that he would make inquiry on that subject; and ere long, he told me he had met with two brothers of the name of Sheridan, who agreed to land a person in France, and to find a third, if necessary, to man the boat.

"In the course of the day, proclamations, offering 1,000*l.* from government, and 500*l.* from the city, with as much made up of minor subscriptions from gaolers and others, for my apprehension, were dispersed through all the environs of Dublin.

"It being determined on to employ Mr. Sweetman's boat, it became necessary to purchase several articles, such as a compass, charts and provisions, for which he was obliged to go to Dublin. On his return I met him, and shortly after we were joined by the two Sheridans, one of whom, taking out of his pocket one of the proclamations, showed it to Mr. Sweetman, and said, '*It is Mr. Hamilton Rouan we are to take to France.*' 'Yes,' replied Mr. Sweetman, 'and here he is;' and introduced me to them, immediately the elder brother said, '*Never mind it; by J—s we will land him safe.*'

"The wind being fair, it was determined to sail that night, but not to mention anything to Murphy, who was the third person whom they had engaged, until we were all on board. Every thing went well until we were near Wrexford, when the wind changed, and blew so hard that we were driven back to take shelter under Howth. * * * The weather had cleared before morning, and we again spread our sail with a fair wind. In crossing the British channel, while we were nearer to England than to France, we

found ourselves enveloped by a British fleet coming up the channel; but the ships which served as convoy kept between them and the French coast, so that we passed unobserved. As we neared France, we were saluted by the fire of one of the numerous small batteries which were erected along the shores. This was for want of colours; so I borrowed Sheridan's night-cap, which by chance was red, filled it with straw, stuck it on a boat-hook, and lashed it to the helm as a *bonnet de liberté*, and thus sailed unmolested to the mouth of a small bay under the fort of St. Paul de Leon, called Roscoff. Here we saw a small fishing boat, which I boarded, and having divided what cash I had remaining in my purse equally among my crew, I ordered them to make for England, and the fishermen to take me to the town. This transaction passing in view of the town, the quay was crowded with inquirers, and I was taken up to the Hotel de Ville. I was detained there some time before any one of the constituted authorities arrived, and was then very minutely searched for papers. The *Dublin Evening Post*, which contained the proclamation, I handed to the president, who was commandant of the fort. I told him my story; to which he coolly answered, after a few questions, that as by my own account I had escaped from prison in my own country, he would take care I should not escape from him; and he ordered me to be confined in the upper room of the Town House, with a sentry in the room, until the mayor of the town should arrive and examine me. I then requested that a letter from me to the *Comité de Salut Public* in Paris should be forwarded immediately, which he promised, and it was forthwith put in execution. It was now near the close of day; and, fatigued from the voyage and agitated spirits, I laid myself on a straw mattress which was placed in the corner of the room, and fell asleep."*

The further course of Rowan's life does not belong to this history. We may, however, mention that after staying about a year in France, where he had more than one narrow miss of being condemned *à la lanterne* as a spy of Pitt's, he got a passport to the United States under an assumed name, and resided in America for several years. He at length received the royal pardon, returned to England in 1806, and (his property having been saved from the legal consequences of his outlawry, by a most unusual circumstance—the goodnatured interposition of Lord Clare) took up his abode at the ancient castle of Killileagh, on his patrimonial estate in the county of Down. More fortunate than the great majority of his contemporaries and colleagues in treason and sedition, Rowan lived on to a hale old age, honoured and beloved, in the discharge of every social and civic duty; lived to attend Rotunda meetings for civil and religious liberty, to see the Catholics emancipated, and the Imperial Parliament reformed. He died in his eighty-fourth year, on the 1st of November, 1834.†

The cause of Rowan's flight was, we have said, his finding himself implicated in the business of Jackson. The trial of the Rev. WILLIAM JACKSON, for high treason, is one of the most memorable events in the history of Ireland at this period, both for the tragic terror of its closing scene, and for the exhibition it gave of the dark and wicked policy which from this time began to rule in the counsels of the government. Mr. Jackson was an Irishman, and a clergyman of the established church. Little known in his profession, he had, some years before the time of which we write, acquired an equivocal description of literary notoriety as the advocate of the celebrated Duchess of Kingston, in controversy with Foote, the farce-writer; in which capacity he had become acquainted with her grace's attorney, a

* Autobiography of Archibald Hamilton Rowan, pp. 213-220.

† The fire of Rowan's youth continued burning almost to the last. In 1825, on Mr. George Robert Dawson and the present Sir Robert Peel attacking the Catholic Association, for having received with loud cheers the subscription of an "attainted traitor," the old man then, in his 75th year, immediately came over to London to demand satisfaction. The offensive words were explained as "not intended to be taken personally."

man of the name of Cockayne. At the beginning of the French revolution he went over to France, where he resided for several years, and recommended himself to the revolutionary authorities as a man of political information and talent. He was now destined to be the first agent in those negotiations between the French government and the Irish patriots which fill so important a place in the history of the ensuing years, and the first victim of that infamous spy system which was beginning to develop itself as a leading feature in the Irish policy of government. Early in 1794, Jackson was sent to England as a secret envoy from the *Comité de Salut Public*, instructed to inquire into and report upon the political condition and temper of Great Britain and Ireland, with especial reference to the probabilities of popular support in the event of a French invasion of propagandism and fraternity. On his arrival in London, he opened the object of his mission to Cockayne. Cockayne, judging that the trade of government spy and informer was a safer and more lucrative business than treason, revealed the whole matter without delay to Mr. Pitt, and received the minister's instructions to attend Jackson to Ireland as a spy (a king's messenger going with them as a second spy on both), to aid and abet all his projects until they should be sufficiently matured to amount to legal treason, and to draw as many of the patriots as possible within the meshes of the law. The object of Mr. Pitt, as the progress of the affair showed, was less to detect treason for the sake of prevention or suppression, than to create it for the uses of a policy of terrorism; it was not to watch and check the machinations of one man, but to manufacture the discontents of many into a conspiracy that might be available for strengthening the hands of government. The proceeding was, as a recent writer calls it, "a voyage of discovery in search of treason, under the superintendence of Mr. Pitt, who allowed his emissary to proceed to Ireland, not to detect a conspiracy, but to form one, and thus increase the dupes of one party and the victims of the other—a singular instance of perfidy and cruelty."*

Our voyagers landed in Ireland on the 1st of April, 1794. Their discoveries were of less importance and extent than their employer probably expected. The result clearly shows that, whatever vague hopes and dim prospective anticipations might have begun to dawn on the minds of certain leaders of the patriots, there did not exist in Ireland at this time any such thing as a French party, seeking domestic revolution through foreign intervention. Jackson's mission was unexpected by the popular leaders; his very name was unknown to them; he had not even an introduction to any individual of note or influence; and his overtures were received, for the most part, with suspicion and distrust. His only political acquaintance in Ireland was one Mr. Leonard M'Nally, a barrister and flaming United Irish patriot; through whom alone he was enabled to effect that limited amount of mischief of which his visit was productive. It is not necessary to recount all the details of this wretchedly weak and foolish business; the patriotic dinings at M'Nally's house, where Cockayne *would pretend to be asleep* (only the shrewd footman could see "*the glistening of his eyes through his fingers*") while the guests were warming into treason over their wine†—the prison colloquies with Rowan—the proposals

* "Memoirs of the Life and Times of the Right Hon. Henry Grattan," vol. iv., p. 165.

† See "Life of Curran," vol. i., p. 289. From a manuscript note in Rowan's copy of Emmet's and Macneven's "Pieces of Irish History," it appears that Lord Edward

of a French embassy to Tone—the intercepted letters of Jackson to his employers, &c. The result of one month's labour was that, on the 28th of April, Jackson was committed to Newgate on a charge of high treason; Tone retired to his house in the country, to write historic memoirs, while his aristocratic friends were negotiating with the government to get him permission to leave Ireland as soon as he could arrange his affairs; Rowan escaped from prison; and Mr. M'Nally was found, on his death some years afterwards, to have been for a considerable time in the enjoyment of a yearly pension from government of 300*l*.*

From various causes, Jackson's trial did not take place until a year after his commitment. It is but just to say that during the whole of this period he was treated with every possible indulgence, and was allowed the free enjoyment of the society of his friends.† At length, on the 23rd of April, 1795, he was tried, and convicted on Cockayne's evidence. It is worth noting that this trial, the first for high treason that had taken place in Ireland during more than a century, established a precedent of portentous significance for the legal history of the following years—viz., that, in Ireland, *one witness* was sufficient to convict of high treason. As the act of 7 William III., requiring two witnesses in cases of treason, did not extend to that country, the point remained to be decided on the principles of common law; with a *dictum* of Lord Coke on one side, and counter *dicta* of Judge Foster and Sergeant Hawkins on the other. It was at the expense of poor Jackson that this nice question was set at rest.‡

A week after his conviction, on the 30th of April, 1795, Jackson was brought up for judgment; when a scene ensued, equalling, in dramatic strangeness and horror, anything that is to be found in the *Causes Célèbres*.

"On the morning of the 30th of April, as one of his counsel was proceeding to court, he met in the streets a person warmly attached to the government of the day. The circumstance is trivial, but it marks the party spirit that prevailed, and the manner in which it was sometimes expressed: 'I have (said he) just seen your client, Jackson, pass by on his way to the King's Bench to receive sentence of death. I always said he was a coward, and I find I was not mistaken; his fears have made him sick—as the coach drove by, I observed him, with his head out of the window, vomiting violently.' The other hurried on to the court, where he found his client supporting himself against the dock. His frame was in a state of violent perturbation, but his mind was still collected. He beckoned to his counsel to approach him, and making an effort to squeeze him

Fitzgerald was marked out as one of Cockayne's victims; but he declined to hold any conversation on the subject. See Madden's "United Irishmen," Second Series, vol. ii., p. 44.

* Dr. Madden ("United Irishmen," vol. i., pp. 206-7) mentions this and other instances in which the government adopted the nefarious policy of *pensioning the legal advisers* of the United Irishmen.

† The following anecdote is highly honourable to him:—"A short time before his trial, one of his friends remained with him to a late hour of the night. When he was about to depart, Mr. Jackson accompanied him as far as the place where the gaoler usually waited upon such occasions, until all his prisoners' visitors should have retired. They found the gaoler in a profound sleep, and the keys of the prison lying beside him. 'Poor fellow!' said Mr. Jackson, taking up the keys, 'let us not disturb him; I have already been too troublesome to him in this way.' He proceeded with his friend to the outer door of the prison, which he opened. Here the facility of escaping naturally struck him. He became deeply agitated; but, after a moment's pause, 'I *could* do it,' said he, 'but what would be the consequences to you, and to the poor fellow who has been so kind to me? No! let me rather meet my fate.' He said no more; but, locking the prison door again, returned to his apartment."—"Life of Curran," vol. i., p. 275.

‡ The law of the two countries has since been assimilated, by an act introduced by the late Lord Holland.

with his damp and nerveless hand, uttered in a whisper, and with a smile of mournful triumph, the dying words of Pierre,

‘We have deceived the senate.’

The prisoner’s counsel having detected what they conceived to be a legal informality in the proceedings, intended to make a motion in arrest of his judgment; but it would have been irregular to do so until the counsel for the crown, who had not yet appeared, should first pray the judgment of the court upon him. During this interval, the violence of the prisoner’s indisposition momentarily increased, and the Chief Justice, Lord Clonmell, was speaking of remanding him, when the Attorney-General came in, and called upon the court to pronounce judgment upon him. Accordingly, ‘the Rev. William Jackson was set forward,’ and presented a spectacle equally shocking and affecting. His body was in a state of profuse perspiration; when his hat was removed, a dense steam was seen to ascend from his head and temples; minute and irregular movements of convulsion were passing to and fro upon his countenance; his eyes were nearly closed, and, when at intervals they opened, discovered by the glare of death upon them, that the hour of dissolution was at hand. When called on to stand up before the Court, he collected the remnant of his force to hold himself erect; but the attempt was tottering and imperfect: he stood rocking from side to side, with his arms, in the attitude of firmness, crossed over his breast, and his countenance strained by a last proud effort into an expression of elaborate composure. In this condition he faced all the anger of the offended law, and the more confounding gazes of the assembled crowd. The clerk of the crown now ordered him to hold up his right hand. The dying man disentangled it from the other, and held it up, but it instantly dropped again. Such was his state, when, in the solemn simplicity of the language of the law, he was asked, ‘What he had now to say, why judgment of death and execution thereon should not be awarded against him, according to law?’ Upon this Mr. Curran rose, and addressed some arguments to the court in arrest of judgment. A legal discussion of considerable length ensued. The condition of Mr. Jackson was all this while becoming worse. Mr. Curran proposed that he should be remanded, as he was in a state of body that rendered any communication between him and his counsel impracticable: Lord Clonmell thought it lenity to the prisoner to dispose of the question as speedily as possible. The windows of the court were thrown open to relieve him, and the discussion was renewed; but the fatal group of death-tokens were now collecting fast around him; he was evidently in the final agony. At length while Mr. Ponsonby, who followed Mr. Curran, was urging further reasons for arresting the judgment, their client *sunk in the dock.*”*

The conclusion of this frightful scene is given as follows, in Ridgway’s Report of the Trial (London, 1795):—

“Lord Clonmell:—‘If the prisoner is in a state of insensibility, it is impossible that I can pronounce the judgment of the Court upon him. If Foster had not mentioned a like instance (the case of an old woman brought up at the Old Bailey) humanity and common sense would require that he should be in a state of sensibility.’

“Attorney-General:—‘On that ground I have no objection to his being remanded.’ * * *

“Here the prisoner becoming perfectly insensible, Dr. Thomas Waite, who was present in the court, was desired to go into the dock to him. He, after some examination, informed the Court, there was every apprehension he would go off immediately.’

“Mr. Thomas Kinsley, who was in the jury-box, said he would go down to him; he accordingly went into the dock and in a short time informed the Court that the prisoner was certainly dying.

“The Court ordered Mr. Kinsley to be sworn.—He was sworn accordingly.

“Lord Clonmell: ‘Are you in any profession?’

“Mr. Kinsley: ‘I am an apothecary and druggist.’

“Lord Clonmell:—‘Can you say you understand your profession sufficiently, so as to speak of the state of the prisoner?’

“Mr. Kinsley: I can. I think him verging to eternity; he has every symptom of death about him.’

“Lord Clonmell: ‘Do you conceive him insensible, or in that state as to be able to hear the judgment, or what may be said for or against him?’

* “Life of Curran,” vol. i., pp. 277-281.

"Mr. Kinsley: 'Quite the contrary. I do not think he can hear his judgment.'

"Lord Clonmell: 'Then he must be taken away. Take care, in sending him away, that you do not any mischief. Let him be remanded until further orders.'

"The Sheriff informed the court that the prisoner was *dead*.

"Lord Clonmell: 'Let an inquisition, and a respectable one, be held on the body. You should carefully inquire when and by what means he died.'"

The court then adjourned; the body of the prisoner remaining in the dock, unmoved from the position in which he had expired, until the following day, when an inquest was held. A large quantity of poison was found in his stomach. It appeared in evidence that, on the morning of his being brought up for judgment, the wretched man had taken arsenic and aquafortis in his tea. The verdict of the jury spared the insults which law then awarded to the *felo de se*. There was a splendid funeral, attended by several barristers and members of parliament.

We know not of anything in history, or in fiction, more sternly terrible and tragic than this: dry points and precedents of law debated in presence of a man in the agonies of a hideous death—writs and captions learnedly discoursed on, while arsenic and aquafortis were in active service of a process unknown to the law books—motion for arrest of judgment argued with nicest legal casuistry, while the culprit was already far on his way out of reach of all judgment except one—a dead man *remanded until further orders*.

The prosecution of Rowan and the treason of Jackson give significant indication of the ripening of events towards their crisis. On the one side, the packing of juries, the hiring of evidence, and the employing of spies and informers to manufacture crime for ministerial uses; on the other, agitation turning into conspiracy, and French connexion substituted for conventions of Volunteer delegates; these are the new elements which, from the year 1794, begin to develop themselves in the distracted world of Irish politics. Both parties are drawing closer to each other, coming to a clearer understanding of the real practical question between them, taking their ground, marshalling and recruiting their forces, and getting ready for the *ultimatum* of rebellion and civil war.

On the 4th of May, in this year, the Dublin police visited Taylor's Hall in Back Lane—where the United Irish meetings had succeeded to those of the Catholic Convention—dispersed the assembled patriots, seized their papers, and dissolved the first Society of United Irishmen. When we hear of "United Irishmen" again, it will be not of agitators but of conspirators. In place of strong resolutions and eloquent addresses, we shall have illegal oaths, secret pass-words, military reports, midnight drillings, French correspondence, and all the other apparatus of incipient rebellion.

CHAPTER IX.

A GLEAM OF SUNSHINE—EARL FITZWILLIAM AND CONCILIATION—
GENEROUS CREDULITY OF THE IRISH PEOPLE—DOUBTS AND FEARS
—THE RECALL.

THE year 1795 opened brightly for Ireland. The 4th of January saw the arrival at Dublin Castle of a liberal and honest Lord Lieutenant—the friend of Burke and Grattan, the political ally and colleague of the Duke of Portland, the nephew of the Marquis of Rockingham—a man of known integrity and kind-heartedness, and far-going liberal opinions, whose name was itself a pledge of a thorough change of men and measures in all departments of the state. Rumour positively affirmed—what EARL FITZWILLIAM's acceptance of office sufficiently implied—that he came over as the minister-plenipotentiary of peace and justice, emancipation and reform; empowered to give to the Catholics religious equality, to the whole Irish people just and paternal government. In particular, it was known that the leaders of the Liberal party in parliament had been sent for to England the previous autumn, to assist, with their suggestions and advice, in the new arrangement of the Irish ministry—that Grattan had been closeted with Mr. Pitt on the Catholic question (by special desire, not of the patriot, but of the minister)—and that the result of the interview was considered satisfactory. On the whole, it seemed to be an understood thing, that the Catholics were to receive the last instalment of their emancipation, immediately on demand; and it was presumed that the rest of the new policy of which the new Viceroy was the representative, would be pervaded by the same spirit of justice to Ireland.

Earl Fitzwilliam was received with enthusiastic delight by all classes and parties of the people—the extreme ascendancy bigots, and the ultras of the discomfited and dispersed United Irishmen, alone excepted. Addresses of congratulation poured in from all the principal cities and towns of the kingdom; which addresses the Viceroy answered in as explicit language, on the subject of popular government in general, and the Catholic claims in particular, as was consistent with the decorum of viceregal etiquette. All Ireland rejoiced, with a unanimity which it had not known for thirteen years past, at the return to power of the men of 1782. Not one Protestant corporation—scarcely one individual—came forward to interpose objections to the expected emancipation and reform, which were to complete at last the work that the Volunteers had left imperfect. Everything looked bright and full of promise. By this mission of Earl Fitzwilliam, Mr. Pitt had ensured the speedy and entire pacification of Ireland—if he meant to keep faith with Ireland; if not, it was a master-piece of perfidy and incendiarism, a provocative of rebellion, of more stimulant efficacy than the whole penal code together.

The opening of parliament (22nd of January) was full of happy augury for the character and work of the session. The viceregal speech did not, it is true, say a great deal, but there was a tone of unwonted earnestness and heartiness even in its generalities; and it had one paragraph in par-

ticular, on the subject of popular education, which expressed much and seemed to imply more;—the Protestant Charter-schools were mentioned disparagingly, as only “partial” in the advantages derived from them, and it was hoped that, “*as circumstances had made other considerations connected with that important subject highly necessary*, the wisdom of parliament would order everything relating to it *in the manner best adapted to the occasions of the several descriptions of men which composed his Majesty’s faithful subjects in Ireland.*” The address in answer to the speech was moved by Mr. Grattan, and carried without a division; and at the same time he presented a petition from the Dublin Catholics, for immediate and complete emancipation, the first of a vast number which came rapidly pouring in from every part of the kingdom. On the 12th of February, at the express wish of the Lord Lieutenant, Mr. Grattan moved for leave to bring in a Catholic Relief Bill; and leave was given accordingly, with only three dissentient voices. Everything gave promise of a tranquil, pleasant, and highly useful session: emancipation first, and reform next, with repeal of the Convention Bill and reduction of pensions to follow, were looked for with a universal and undoubting faith. The liberality of the administration was responded to, in happy obliviousness of the experience of 1793, by at least an equal liberality on the part of the Opposition. Rather, there was no Opposition. Men and money were voted at a rate which had no previous example in Irish history, despite the cautionary suggestion of one unbeliever (Mr. Duquerry) who “thought it right that, before they voted the money of the people, they should know what the people were to get.” All men believed that Ireland was saved: and Burke wrote to Grattan, on the 3rd of March, “I feel as much joy as my poor broken heart is capable of receiving, from the manner in which the Irish session has opened.”

On the 19th of March, a British cabinet council unanimously decided on Earl Fitzwilliam’s RECALL, as “a measure necessary for the preservation of the empire.”

It does not belong to the object of this history to unravel the ministerial intrigues by which this disastrous consummation was accomplished, or to assign the precise motive, or combination of motives, which prompted this outrageous breach of faith with the expectant and confiding Irish people. Earl Fitzwilliam himself thought it was the doing of the Beresford family and faction, whose enormous political monopoly (coupled, as it was, with much “imputed malversation”) he found it necessary, at the commencement of his administration, to break down.* Others have seen in the business a systematic scheme for goading Ireland into rebellion, with a view to prepare the way for the legislative union;† not that there is any essential incongruity between the two explanations. The return of the Beresfords to power was the shortest road to rebellion—there was rebellion in the very name. It does not greatly signify, however, whose doing it was; in any case, the perfidy was the same, and the mischief was the same. The duplicity and treachery of Pitt in this matter, as

* See his Letters to the Earl of Carlisle (1795). Burke’s letter to Grattan, of the 5th of March (quoted in “Life of Grattan,” vol. iv., p. 202), opens a glimpse into a whole world of intrigue and cabal.

† Barrington’s “Historic Memoirs,” vol. ii., pp. 241-2.

shown in the honest and manly letters of Earl Fitzwilliam, have rarely been surpassed in Anglo-Irish, or any other history. The dismissed and duped Viceroy says:—

“ From the very beginning, as well as through the whole progress of that fatal business—for fatal, I fear, I must call it—I acted in perfect conformity with the original outline settled between me and his Majesty’s ministers, previous to my departure from London. From a full consideration of the real merits of the case, as well as from every information I had been able to collect of the state and temper of Ireland, from the year 1793, I was decidedly of opinion that not only sound policy but justice required, on the part of Great Britain, that the work which was left imperfect at that period ought to be completed, and the Catholics relieved from every remaining disqualification. In this opinion the Duke of Portland uniformly concurred with me; and when the question came under discussion, previous to my departure for Ireland, I found the cabinet, with Mr. Pitt at their head, strongly impressed with the same conviction. *Had I found it otherwise, I never would have undertaken the government.* I at first proposed that the additional indulgences should be offered from the throne. The very best effects would be secured by this act of unsolicited graciousness. But to this proposal objections were started that appeared of sufficient weight to induce the adoption of another plan. I consented not to bring the question forward on the part of government, but rather to endeavour to keep it back until a period of more general tranquillity, when so many material objects might not press upon the government. But, *as the principle was agreed on, and the necessity of its being brought into full effect was universally allowed,* it was at the same time resolved that *if the Catholics should appear determined to stir the business, and bring it before parliament, I was to give it a handsome support on the part of government.* ”

“ I was no sooner landed, and informed of the real state of things here, than I found that the question would force itself upon my immediate consideration. Faithful to the system that had been agreed on, and anxious to attain the object that had been committed to my discretion, I lost not a moment in gaining every necessary information, or in transmitting the result to the British cabinet. *As early as the 8th of January, I wrote to the Secretary of State on the subject.* I told him that I trembled about the Roman Catholics; that I had great fears about keeping them quiet for the session; that I found the question already in agitation; that a committee was appointed to bring forward a petition to parliament, praying for a repeal of all remaining disqualifications.”

After further inquiries, and personal interviews with the Catholic leaders, he again wrote to the Secretary of State (15th January); when, he says—

“ I concluded by declaring that I should not do my duty, if I did not distinctly relate it as my opinion, that not to grant cheerfully on the part of government all the Catholics wished for, would not only be exceedingly impolitic, but perhaps dangerous; that in doing this no time was to be lost; that the business would be presently at hand, and that the first step I took would be of infinite importance; that, *if I received no very peremptory directions to the contrary, I should acquiesce*—I meant in the time, in the mode of proceeding, and in the extent of the demands; for, as to the measure considered generally, I could conceive no necessity to wait for any new direction on which to decide. Of this I reminded the Secretary of State. ‘Convinced,’ I said, ‘as we all are, of the necessity, as well as fitness of the measure taking place at no distant period, I was decidedly of opinion that any attempt to defer it would be useless, if not dangerous.’ ”

To all which not one syllable of censure, remonstrance, objection, or even cautionary suggestion did the minister send back in reply, during the first five weeks of Earl Fitzwilliam’s viceroyalty. Letter after letter was sent to Dublin Castle, without a hint of doubt or difficulty on the subject. It was not till after the Irish parliament had, on the faith of the promised emancipation and reform, concurred, with a nearly unexampled unanimity, in grants of men and money larger than had ever been known before; it was not till after the heart of the people had been fully set on these measures; it was not till the 9th of February, that the British cabinet

began answering the Lord Lieutenant's letters—speaking of the Catholic question *as a new subject*, asking for “information” to enable them to form an opinion as to the “policy, expediency, safety, and necessity” of the measure, and cautioning the Viceroy against “committing himself,” while they knew that, with their sanction implied and expressed, he had committed himself and them over and over again already.

The astounded Viceroy replied by referring his colleagues to all that had previously passed on the subject, expressing, for about the twentieth time, his conviction of the infinite peril of even seeming to hesitate, and refusing “to be the person to raise *a flame in the country, which nothing short of arms would be able to keep down.*” He was taken at his word; a “flame in the country” being, it would appear, precisely the thing which the British minister desired. On the 25th of March, the last minister of peace and justice to Ireland was attended to the shore by the parliamentary leaders and other distinguished individuals, dressed in black, followed by a vast concourse of persons of all classes, sects, and parties; and Ireland was left in the hands of the Beresfords, the Tolers, and the Fitzgibbons, to be got ready, as soon as might be, for martial law and military execution.

Thus were the Irish people again made victims to what Flood called their “generous credulity.” When Grattan was on his way to an interview with Pitt, in the month of October previous, Mr. Serjeant Adair had kindly warned him—“All that is to be done *should be set down in writing, for if you have any dealings with Pitt, he'll cheat you.* I never would act with him, unless I had pen, ink, and paper.” The caution, unfortunately, was not heeded, Mr. Grattan's generous and confiding nature not comprehending the sharp practice of official diplomacy. He committed the enormous blunder of imagining that, in official honour and morality, a tacit mutual understanding is as good as a signed and witnessed memorandum of agreement.

It was said by an Irish Opposition member (Sir Laurence Parsons), while Earl Fitzwilliam's recall was still only a matter of unauthorised rumour—“If the British Cabinet have agreed to the Catholic measure, and then withdraw their support from it, and with it Lord Fitzwilliam, the demon of darkness could not have done more mischief. If the minister perseveres, *the army must be increased to myriads, and every man must have dragoons in his house.*” The prophecy was not designed, probably, to be taken quite literally; but it received, at no distant date, a proximate fulfilment, in the Free Quarters of 1798.

CHAPTER X.

IRELAND IN 1795 AND 1796—GATHERING OF THE STORM—NEW ORGANIZATION OF UNITED IRISHMEN—PEEP-OF-DAY BOYS AGAIN—WILLIAM THRESHAM AND JOHN THRUSTOUT—BATTLE OF THE DIAMOND—FIRST ORANGE LODGE—INDEMNITY AND INSURRECTION ACTS—DOMICILIARY VISITS AND ARRESTS—THE REBEL ARMY GETTING READY.

ON the 31st of March, 1795, the new Lord Lieutenant, Earl Camden, entered Dublin, and made his way to the Castle, under convoy of a detachment of cavalry with drawn swords. It was a dark day for Ireland—ominous of worse that were to follow. There was much breaking of windows, and some bloodshed. The Archbishop of Armagh was insulted in his coach by the mob, the Speaker's and Mr. Beresford's houses were attacked—and the Lord Chancellor, after a hot chase from the Castle to his residence in Ely-place, was wounded in the forehead with a paving stone. It was a characteristic opening of the new administration, that the Viceroy's first official act was a proclamation offering rewards for the apprehension and conviction of rioters.

All this, though "extremely disagreeable," as Mr. Hardy says, was by no means surprising. Lord Camden was, personally, not unpopular, and had some hereditary claims on the favourable regards of Irishmen,*—but, whatever virtues he may have possessed, Ireland could know him only as the representative of a perfidious and anti-national policy. He came to undo, and worse than undo, the work of conciliation which Earl Fitzwilliam had begun—to restore the momentarily disturbed *status in quo* of ascendancy and incipient rebellion, aggravated by recent disappointment and insult. His very presence in Ireland was an offence; his mission was a breach of faith, a *casus belli*—his arrival was a declaration of war. Earl Fitzwilliam's recall "lost to England the heart of Ireland."† It turned over the country to the ascendancy men and the United Irishmen. The Beresfords and Fitzgibbons now came back to power, with the appetite of tyranny whetted by a two months' fast, more than ever disposed to strong and cruel measures; and the patriots despaired of agitation, thought no more of emancipation and reform, but put their trust in conspiracy, and set their hearts on revolution. "From this time," says Plowden, "the very tint of moderation seems to have been effaced from every transaction that affected the public weal." Henceforward there were in Ireland only two parties—the tyrant party, and the traitor party; the government and the people had entered, once for all, into a state of war. Well might Grattan say (in his reply to the address of the Dublin Catholics), "I tremble at the return to power of your old taskmasters—that combination which galled the country with its tyranny, insulted her by its manners, exhausted her by its rapacity, and slandered her by its malice. Should such a combination, once inflamed, as it must be now, by the favour of the British court and the reprobation of the Irish people—return to power, I have no hesitation to

* He was the son of the Lord Camden who gave the Belfast Volunteers the sage but unheeded counsel to "keep it up."

† Grattan.

say that *they will extinguish Ireland, or Ireland must remove them.*" In five years from that day the prophecy was fulfilled, in the former alternative, by the "extinguishment" of the Irish nationality.

The spirit of popular discontent soon embodied itself in a fit organization. Within six weeks after the arrival of the new Viceroy, the more resolute and far-going of the old United Irish leaders re-constituted their association (10th May, 1795) on a new principle, and with bolder aims. The old name was still retained, but the objects and methods of the new Society of United Irishmen were considerably different from those of the societies of 1791. The original test of reform principles was now changed into an oath of secrecy and fidelity; and the pledge to emancipation and reform was expanded and generalised, by the omission of the word *parliament*, into a confession of political faith virtually equivalent to republicanism, though not ostensibly avowing it. The question of monarchy was carefully left an open question, by the adoption of a test so worded that republicans and constitutional reformers could each subscribe it as an expression of their respective creeds. The oath was as follows:—

"In the awful presence of God, I, A. B., do voluntarily declare that I will persevere in endeavouring to form a brotherhood of affection among Irishmen of every religious persuasion, and that I will also persevere in my endeavours to obtain an *equal, full, and adequate representation of all the people of Ireland.*

"I do further declare that neither hopes, fears, rewards, nor punishments, shall ever induce me, directly or indirectly, to inform on or give evidence against any member or members of this or similar societies, for any act or expression of theirs done or made, collectively or individually, in or out of this society, in pursuance of the spirit of this obligation."*

This new United Irish organisation was constructed with the utmost ingenuity and caution, for the ends of secrecy and unity of action. It was as cunningly complicated a piece of political machinery as the world has seen; a sort of pyramidal hierarchy of sedition, with an infinite number of small local societies for its base, gradually towering up through the nicely fitted gradations of baronial, county, and provincial committees, to the apex of a national executive directory. The local associations were not allowed to consist of more than twelve persons each, who were to be resident, as nearly as possible, in the same street or neighbourhood. By each of these primary assemblies of twelve a secretary was chosen; and the secretaries of five of such associations constituted what was called a lower baronial committee, with power to direct all the proceedings of their constituents. The next step in the ascent was the upper baronial committee of ten, composed of delegates from that number of lower baronials. Then came the district or county committees, to which each of the upper baronials within the district or county sent one member. Above these, again, were the provincial committees, constituted by the delegation of two or three members from each of the county committees in the province; and at the head of the whole was the metropolitan or national Executive Directory of five, elected by ballot from the provincial committees, in so ingenious a way that the electors were kept in entire ignorance of their

* See the whole of the constitution and rules of the second Society of United Irishmen, in Madden, vol. ii., Appendix.

This author gives a curious collection (*ibid.*, p. 372, &c.) of the secret signs, passwords, and emblems in use among the members of the Union.

own representatives, the knowledge of the individual chosen being confined to the secretary of the provincial committee. The Executive Directory, thus constituted, had the supreme and uncontrolled command of the whole body of the union. In conformity with the general principle of secrecy which pervaded the whole of this curious compound of representation and despotism, the mode of doing business was, for one member only of the directory to transmit the orders of the five to the secretary of the provincial committee—the provincial secretary alone was to communicate with the county secretary alone—and so on, through the upper and lower baronial secretaries, down to the primary assemblies of twelve. Such was the new Society of United Irishmen; an organisation without precedent or parallel in the annals of conspiracy; a widely-diffused and variously-ramified confederacy of affiliated associations, on the principle of popular representation in the ascending scale, and arbitrary power in the descending scale. It was an experiment, new in history, how far the zeal and enthusiasm of a people could be organised to work with the secrecy and unity of a court of Star-Chamber.

Of the views and expectations of the United Irish patriots at this period, the following account is given in the Memoir of the Origin and Progress of the Irish Union, drawn up by O'Connor, Emmet, and Macneven,* while in prison, and handed in to the Irish government:—

"The first of these societies was, as we best recollect, in the year 1795. In order to secure co-operation and uniformity of action, they organised a system of committees, baronial, county, and provincial, and even national; but it was long before the skeleton of this organisation was filled up. While the formation of these societies was in agitation, the friends of liberty were gradually, but with a timid step, advancing towards republicanism. They began to be convinced that *it would be as easy to obtain a revolution as a reform*, so obstinately was the latter resisted; and as the conviction impressed itself on their minds, they were inclined not to give up the struggle but to extend their views. It was for this reason that in their test the words are, 'an equal representation of all the people of Ireland,' without inserting the word 'parliament.' This test embraced both the republicans and reformers, and left to future circumstances to decide to which point the common strength should be directed; but still the whole body, we are convinced, would rejoice to stop short at reform. Another consideration, however, led the minds of reflecting United Irishmen to look towards a republic and separation from England. This was the *war with France*. They clearly perceived that their strength was not likely to become speedily equal to wresting from the English and borough interest in Ireland even a reform; foreign assistance would therefore, perhaps, become necessary. But foreign assistance could only be hoped for in proportion as the object to which it would be applied was important to the party giving it. A reform in the Irish parliament was no object to the French: a separation of Ireland from England was a mighty one indeed. Thus they reasoned: Shall we, between two objects, confine ourselves to the least valuable, even though it is equally difficult to be obtained, if we consider the relations of Ireland with the rest of Europe?

"Whatever progress the united system had made among the Catholics throughout the kingdom, until after the recall of Lord Fitzwilliam, notwithstanding many resolutions which had appeared from them manifesting a growing spirit, they were considered not only as entertaining an habitual spirit for monarchy, but also as being less attached than the Presbyterians to political liberty. There were, however, certain men among them who rejoiced at the rejection of their claims, because it gave them an opportunity of pointing out that the adversaries of reform were their adversaries, and that these two objects never could be separated with any chance of success to either. They used the recall of that nobleman and the rejection of his measures to cement together in political union the Catholic and Presbyterian masses.

* Quoted by Plowden, "Historical Review," vol. ii., p. 535. None of them were actually members of the Union until September or October in the year 1796.

"The modern societies, for their protection against informers and prosecutions, had introduced into their test a clause of secrecy. They did more—they changed the engagement of their predecessors into an oath; and mutual confidence increased when religion was called in aid of mutual secrecy."

How far the increase of mutual confidence was justified, and the hope of protection against informers and prosecutions realised by the system of secrecy and oath-taking, will appear as we proceed. It does not seem to have occurred to these dexterous organisers, that the expedients which they adopted to exclude treachery from their counsels were excellently calculated to conceal treachery, if once introduced; that the mystery which characterised their proceedings was at least as likely to excite suspicion as to elude detection; that every false and artificial security is a real peril; that the sanction of such "religion" as is in an oath is, as a general rule, either useless or needless, inoperative in those cases in which the swearer's honesty does not render it superfluous; and that, on the whole, all this elaborate machinery of mutual mystification was exactly the thing to create spies and informers, by offering a fine field for their labours, and raising the market-price of their discoveries. The "mutual confidence" in "mutual secrecy" was, in the sequel, the ruin of hundreds and thousands of Ireland's best and bravest. For the present, however, things looked well. The new societies of United Irishmen increased and multiplied, with the progress of the insolent misgovernment which had called them into being; and events seemed to be fast fulfilling Lord Charlemont's prediction, "If we do not make some exertion, next Christmas-day may see the people in the hands of the United Irishmen."*

The whole state of Ireland at this period betokened the rapid approach of some hideous national convulsion. There seemed a general snapping and sundering of all civil ties; society swung loose from its moorings of law and order; the old established chronic maladies of Ireland were fast becoming acute, and verging to a crisis. While political agitation was transformed into conspiracy, loud sedition hushed into secret treason, and the National Convention exchanged for the Executive Directory of five, the prædial agitation by pike and torch was everywhere growing up to the dimensions of civil war. The year 1795 was a year of much prosperity for the Defenders. From an early period of the summer, the outrages of these peasant insurgents increased daily in formidableness and extent. They appeared in armed bodies of several hundreds, rescuing prisoners, attacking magistrates and police, and murdering individuals obnoxious to them. In most counties of the kingdom associations were formed, and subscriptions entered into among the gentry, for defence of life and property (these new respectable Defenders being little more scrupulous than their humbler brethren about adhering to the strict object of their association); and, "in some counties," says Plowden, "gentlemen were forced to keep in their houses a constant military guard to preserve them and their families from depredation and murder." At the summer assizes several Defenders were tried for high treason, and duly convicted and executed; but the mischief did not receive even a temporary check, for the deeper mischiefs of which it was the sign continued in unabated activity. In the month of September, this war of the Defenders and Peep-of-Day Boys raged in its native county

* Hardy's "Life of Lord Charlemont," vol. ii., p. 348.

(Armagh) on a scale of unexampled extent and ferocity. The two parties remained for several days openly under arms, preparing for a general engagement, with the full knowledge and under the very eye of those authorities whose duty it was to have restrained them;”* and at length, on the 21st of September, was fought the *Battle of the Diamond*—still commemorated in the political convivialities of the ascendancy men—in which the Defenders were routed with great slaughter.

This 21st day of September, 1795, is memorable in Irish history for an event of far more fatal import than even the Battle of the Diamond. On this day, at the house of a man named Sloan, in the village of Loughgall, in Armagh, not far from the Diamond battle-field, *the first ORANGE LODGE was formed*. Any detailed account of the tests, oaths, rules, and proceedings of the Orange Association, under the more systematic form which it assumed within two or three years after its commencement, we are not concerned to give here.† The Orangemen of 1795 were simply Peep-of-Day Boys under a graver name, organised by secret oaths and tests into a denser and compacter body, reinforced by the gradual accession of Protestant wealth and respectability, encouraged by a fuller assurance of magisterial and ministerial protection, and stimulated by a more ferocious spirit of partisanship and bigotry. From the date of this fatal 21st September, the county of Armagh was the scene of a course of systematic and unchecked atrocities, such as, in any other country than Ireland, would be considered as transcending the ordinary license of civil war. Robbery, arson, kidnapping, and murder—carried on as a system for weeks and months together, by day and by night, with the scarcely disguised sympathy and approval of the magistracy, and the merest make-believe of resistance on the part of the government—were the first fruits of an organisation which (whether the “purple test” or oath of papist extermination be historical or mythical we need not now inquire) had no other practical aim than the extermination, by fire and sword, of the whole community of Catholics from the whole province of Ulster, beginning with Armagh county. The true character of the Orange system, and of the Protestant ascendancy for which Orangeism is but another name, and of the government that looked on with folded hands while the exterminators were going forward with their work, appears sufficiently from the following often-quoted address of Lord Gosford, as governor of Armagh, to a meeting of the magistrates of the county, on the 28th of December :—

“It is no secret that a persecution, accompanied with all the circumstances of ferocious cruelty which have in all ages distinguished that dreadful calamity, is now raging in this county. *Neither age, nor sex, nor even acknowledged innocence as to the late disturbances, is sufficient to excite mercy, much less to afford protection.* The only crime which the wretched objects of this merciless persecution are charged with, is a crime of easy proof—it is simply a *profession of the Roman Catholic faith*. A lawless banditti have constituted themselves judges of this new species of delinquency, and the sentence they pronounce is equally concise and terrible: it is nothing less than a *confiscation of all property, and immediate banishment*. It would be extremely painful, and surely unnecessary, to detail the horrors that attend the execution of so wide and tremendous a

* Charles Teeling’s “Observations on the History and Consequences of the Battle of the Diamond” (quoted by Dr. Madden).

† The Report of the parliamentary Committee of 1835 on Orange institutions and practices, is well worth being studied by all who would know what Protestant Ascendancy means.—The Edinburgh Review for January, 1836, contains a useful analysis of the disclosures elicited by that investigation.

proscription, which certainly exceeds, in the comparative number of those it consigns to ruin and misery, every example that ancient or modern history can afford: for where have we heard, or in what history of human cruelties have we read, of more than half the inhabitants of a populous county deprived at one blow of the means as well as the fruits of their industry, and driven, in the midst of an inclement winter, to seek a shelter for themselves and their hapless families where chance may guide them? This is no exaggerated picture of the horrid scenes now acting in this county; yet surely it is sufficient to awaken sentiments of indignation and compassion in the coldest heart. *These horrors are now acting, and acting with impunity.* The spirit of impartial justice (without which law is nothing better than tyranny) has for a time disappeared in this county; and the supineness of the magistracy of Armagh is a topic of conversation in every corner of this kingdom."

Two months later, Mr. Grattan* was allowed to say, in his place in Parliament, without the slightest contradiction in the debate, and without the slightest influence on the division, that

"The object of the Armagh disturbances was the extermination of all the Catholics of that county. It was a persecution conceived in the bitterness of bigotry, carried on with the most ferocious barbarity, by a banditti who, being of the religion of the state, had committed with the greater audacity and confidence the most horrid murders, and had proceeded from robbery and massacre to extermination; they had repealed by their own authority all the laws lately passed in favour of the Catholics, had established, in the place of those laws, the inquisition of a mob, resembling Lord George Gordon's fanatics, equalling them in outrage, and surpassing them far in perseverance and success.

"Their modes of outrage were as various as they were atrocious; they sometimes forced by terror the masters of families to dismiss their Catholic servants; they sometimes forced landlords by terror to dismiss their Catholic tenantry; they seized as deserters numbers of Catholic weavers; sent them to the county gaol, transmitted them to Dublin, where they remained in close prison until some lawyers from compassion pleaded their cause and procured their enlargement—nothing appearing against them of any kind whatsoever. Those insurgents, who called themselves Orange Boys, or Protestant Boys—that is, a banditti of murderers, committing massacre in the name of God, and exercising despotic power in the name of liberty; those insurgents have organised their rebellion, and have formed themselves into a committee, who sit and try the Catholic weavers and inhabitants, when apprehended, falsely and illegally, as deserters; this rebellious committee they call the Committee of Elders, who, when the unfortunate Catholic is torn from his family and his loom and brought before them, sit in judgment upon his case; if he gives them liquor or money, they sometimes discharge him; otherwise, they send him to a recruiting officer as a deserter. They had very generally given the Catholics notice to quit their farms and dwellings; which notice is plastered on their houses, and conceived in these short but plain words—'Go to Hell, Connaught will not receive you—fire and faggot! WILL. THRESHAM and JOHN THREUSTOUT.' They followed these notices by a faithful and punctual execution of the horrid threat; soon after visited the house, robbed the family, and destroyed what they did not take; and finally completed the atrocious persecutions by forcing the unfortunate inhabitants to leave their dwellings and their trade, and to travel with their miserable family, and with whatever their miserable family could save from the wreck of their houses and tenements, and take refuge in villages as fortifications against invaders, where they described themselves, as I have seen in their affidavits, in the following manner; 'We (mentioning their names) formerly of Armagh, weavers, now of no fixed place of abode or means of living,' &c. In many instances this banditti of persecution threw down the houses of the tenantry, or what they call 'wrecked' the house, so that the family must fly or be buried in the grave of their own cabin. The extent of the murders that have been committed by this atrocious and rebellious banditti I have heard, but have not heard them so ascertained as to state them to this house; but, from all the enquiries I could make, I collect that the Catholic inhabitants of Armagh have been actually put out of the pro-

* February 22, 1796, on his motion for bringing the crime of "exterminating his Majesty's subjects" within the operation of the Insurrection Act.

tection of the law; that the magistrates have been supine or partial; and that the horrid banditti have met with complete success, and from the magistracy with very little discouragement.”*

Of the extent of these Armagh outrages we are not aware that any precise account has ever been taken. It was generally believed, however, Plowden says, that from five to seven thousand Catholics “had been forced or burned out of the county of Armagh, and that the ferocious banditti who had expelled them had been encouraged, connived at, countenanced, instigated, or protected by the government.” The effect of these detestable proceedings, and of the Orange organisation in general, was to bring large and rapid accessions to the numbers of the United Irish Societies. The Memoir already quoted says—

“To the Armagh persecution the union of Irishmen is most exceedingly indebted. The persons and properties of the wretched Catholics of that county were exposed to the merciless attacks of an Orange faction, which was certainly in many instances uncontrolled by the justices of peace, and claimed to be, in all, supported by government. When these men found that illegal acts of magistrates were indemnified by occasional statutes, and the courts of justice shut against them by parliamentary barriers, they began to think they had no refuge but in joining the union. Their dispositions so to do were much increased by finding the Presbyterians, of Belfast especially, step forward to espouse their cause, and succour their distress. We will here remark once for all, what we most solemnly aver, that *wherever the Orange system was introduced*, particularly in Catholic counties, *it was uniformly observed that the numbers of the United Irishmen increased most astonishingly*. The alarm which an Orange Lodge excited among the Catholics made them look for refuge by joining together in the united system; and, as their number was always greater than that of bigoted Protestants, our harvest was tenfold.”

While the constituted authorities in Ulster were tolerantly looking on at the most savage excesses of party violence, allowing the powers of law to sleep idly in their hands, their brethren in other parts of the kingdom were busy in the exertion of what the government cant of the day called a “vigour beyond the law.” In the autumn and winter of this year, the government, seriously alarmed at the progress of Defenderism, sent Lord Carhampton, the Commander-in-Chief, into the disturbed districts of the west, to quell insurrection and restore tranquillity. His lordship’s mode of discharging the trust committed to him is thus admiringly described by Sir Richard Musgrave:—

“In each county he assembled the most respectable gentlemen and landholders in it, and having, in concert with them, examined the charges against the leaders of this banditti, who were in prison but defied justice, he, with the concurrence of these gentlemen, sent the most nefarious of them on board a tender stationed at Sligo, to serve in the King’s

* An “Old Officer of Cavalry,” who, as a cornet in the 24th Light Dragoons, accompanied his regiment to Ireland in 1795, and was stationed at Loughgall, writes (in October, 1839)—

“There I remained several months, and during that period I witnessed the excesses committed by the Orange party, who now began to form themselves into lodges, and the dreadful persecutions to which the Catholic inhabitants were subjected. *Night after night I have seen the sackings and burnings of the dwellings of these poor people.* * * * Many of the Orangemen, notwithstanding the secrecy with which they conducted their proceedings, were discovered on private information, and brought to trial. But most of them, through the influence of their party, escaped, either altogether or with slight punishment. In one case, a most atrocious one, a man had been sentenced to death. *This man’s sentence was respited. And I well remember the whole country round being illuminated with bonfires in manifestation of the joy of the Orangemen on that occasion.*”—See “Life of Grattan,” vol. iv., p. 235.

troops. By this bold measure, founded in obvious principles of political necessity, he completely restored peace in the disturbed counties. *The loyal inhabitants and the grand juries in them thanked Lord Carhampton for his wise and salutary exertions.*"*

That is to say, the Commander-in-Chief and the "most respectable gentlemen and landholders" assumed to themselves the power of discretionary transportation, without trial or the form of trial. The victims of this infamous piece of tyranny—to the number, it is said, of about thirteen hundred—were tied on cars and dragged away for shipment, weeping in bitter agony and crying aloud for trial. The "disaffected," adds the loyal baronet, "raised a great clamour," and meditated—in some instances commenced—prosecutions and actions for damages against the military and magisterial kidnappers. But it shortly afterwards appeared that parliament was of the same opinion with the "loyal inhabitants and grand juries," and deemed the exertions of the authorities "wise and salutary : " all legal proceedings were promptly quashed, within the first week of the ensuing session, by an Act of Indemnity.

The session of 1796 was industriously employed by the government, which now wielded an unchecked ascendancy in parliament,† in adding new combustible and explosive matter to the distracted state of Ireland. Concession and conciliation were now not pretended ; it does not appear to have been considered necessary, for the sake of appearances, to allow even their desirableness in the abstract. Coercion—prompt, absolute, unsparing, and indiscriminating—was assumed without disguise, as the first duty of a government towards its natural enemy, the people ; any second duty was unrecognised in the political philosophy of that day. The session began (21st of January,) with a Lord Lieutenant's speech adverting with "regret" to the "disturbances," and to the existence of "secret and treasonable associations of dangerous extent and malignity," complimenting the magistracy on their "successful and meritorious exertions," and calling for additional powers "to restore a proper reverence for the laws of the country,"—and with an Attorney-General's speech, stating that "conspiracies to murder were frequent, and that *the idea of assassination had become as familiar as that of fowling.*" The two measures of the session were an Indemnity Bill and an Insurrection Bill. The former we have already mentioned. It legitimated, by a retrospective operation, all the enormities of Lord Carhampton and his revolutionary committee of respectable gentlemen and landholders : thus "striking the poor out of the protection of the law, and the rich out of its penalties." The Insurrection Bill was designed to supersede all necessity for any future act of indemnity, by at once explicitly legalising the class of outrages for which indemnity was then needed, and making discretionary power of transportation an established incident of the magisterial office. The temper of the government and the parliament very significantly appeared in the debates preliminary to the passing of this measure, and in the Attorney-General's resolutions (22nd of February) on which it was founded. The crimes of the Defenders were sedulously enumerated, and held up, in sufficient amplitude of detail, to legislative abhorrence ; the crimes of the Orange-

* "Memoirs of the Rebellions in Ireland," vol. i., p. 175.

† The Whigs never rallied after the recall of Lord Fitzwilliam. From this time the forces of the parliamentary Opposition rarely mustered above sixteen votes—often not half that number.

men were not touched even by remotest allusion. Enough was said of the seizure of arms and the murder of witnesses in the Defender districts: nothing was hinted of the extermination of fourteen hundred Catholic families in Armagh. The houghing of Protestant bullocks in the south was made more of than the murder of Popish human beings in the north. The enumeration of disturbed districts did not include the vicinity of Lough-gall; nor were the Armagh exterminators brought, either by general description or by specific mention, within the category of the *et cetera* of "disorderly persons" legislated against by the act in company with the Defenders. The chief provisions of this Insurrection Act were, that it made the administering of unlawful oaths *felony of death*;* it empowered a majority of seven magistrates to declare their county in a state of insurrection; and it authorised *any two magistrates* to break open houses at any hour of the day or night to search for arms, to imprison every man whom they might find absent from his house between sunset and sunrise, *arrest all vagrants* having no visible means of livelihood, or otherwise suspected, and *send them to serve on board the king's fleet*. Thus, as the Whig Club complained in their petition, "the country was divided into two classes, or formed into two distinct nations, living under the same king, and inhabiting the same island; one consisting of the king's magistrates, and the other of the king's subjects—the former without restraint, and the latter without privilege." Transportableness for life, with imprisonment, hard labour, and exposure to cannon-shot—at the discretion of any two magistrates—was now formally recognised as a standing condition of existence in Ireland. On the same night that the Indemnity and Insurrection Bills were introduced into the House of Commons, a motion of Curran's for appointing a committee to inquire into *the state of the poor and the wages of labour*, was negatived by a majority of nearly ten to one.

On the 15th of April parliament terminated its labours, under a viceregal assurance that "the vigorous measures adopted to suppress insurrection and outrage promised the most salutary consequences, and would demonstrate to the people the firmness and temper of parliament."

The promise of salutary consequences was so far from being realised during the ensuing summer, that on the 13th of October parliament was again summoned, to make further demonstrations of its firmness and temper. There was not much work left for legislation to do; but what there was, was done quickly. "At two in the morning, the House was moved for leave to bring in a bill to repeal the Habeas Corpus Act; at five minutes past two, the bill was read a first time, and, after a grave and mature deliberation, the bill was ordered to be read a second time, and was read accordingly at ten minutes after two: its principle was then fully considered and approved of, and at fifteen minutes after two it was laid before a committee of the whole House."† The measure was carried, of course, against a minority of seven. Three days afterwards, the House heard the last of the Catholic question: Mr. Grattan's motion for emancipation was supported by the unusually large minority of nineteen. Parliament shortly afterwards separated, leaving the country in the hands of the Orangemen, the magistrates, the Defenders, the United Irishmen, and the army.

* "Felony" was deemed preferable to "treason" in this case, because it deprived the prisoner of the benefit of a counsel's address to the jury.

† Curran, in the debate of 14th October, 1796.

All through the autumn and winter of this year the war went on, growing in force and volume with every successive week. The new powers given by the Insurrection and Habeas-Corpus-Suspension Acts were used to the uttermost; the system of domiciliary visits was carried on with all its usual concomitants of licensed insolence and cruelty;* the number of districts officially declared "disturbed" rapidly increased, especially in Ulster, within which districts every man was imprisoned in his own house from sunset to sunrise, under penalty of transportation by law or military execution without law. "The gaols were now," says an eye-witness and sufferer, "crowded with prisoners; many private houses were turned into military provosts, floating prisons had been established, and the loathsome tenders stationed round the coasts received the surplus of the victims which the land prisons were inadequate to contain. A considerable portion of the army was dispersed in small cantonments through the most populous and fertile districts, and, under pretence of searching for the disaffected, they scoured the country, committing the most wasteful depredations. The people naturally fled at their approach. Absence was construed into guilt; and, disappointed of their victim, the army laid waste, with an indiscriminate hand, house, furniture, corn, cattle; and sometimes innocent and unoffending inmates have perished in the flames which enveloped their property in ruin."†

The United Irishmen meanwhile went on prosperously, notwithstanding that the administering of unlawful oaths was "felony of death." Death had lost its terrors for men who had no longer a country worth living in. "The statute remained an absolute dead letter, and the numbers of the body augmented beyond belief."‡ At this time (October, 1796) the plan and working of the Union underwent a most important modification. The formation of the Protestant Yeomanry corps|| by government, which had taken place shortly before, suggested the necessity of a corresponding and counter-movement on the part of the patriots. Accordingly the society of United Irishmen, from a civil, became a military organisation; the association of political agitators and schemers drilled itself into a rebel army. The process was an extremely simple one, the materials being already collected and arranged to their hands. The secretary of the society of twelve societies to a lower baronial was a captain, with sixty men under his command; and the delegate of ten baronials to a county committee became a

* "The '*Domiciliary Visit*' commenced. It was a visit of darkness and of horror. The depraved mind of man never devised a project more atrocious. There every sense of moral order or feeling of humanity was abandoned. The door, whether of the humble cottage or the lordly mansion, at the dark and dreary hour of night was forced by an armed and turbulent band; and the father, husband, or brother, torn from the grasp of his agonising family, was dragged to torture—perhaps to death; or, doomed to a fate of more lengthened suffering, was hurried on board a prison ship and, without trial or impeachment, like a felon, transported to the distant colonies of Britain or drafted to the ranks of her Prussian ally, one of her '*illustrious subsidies*' in the Gallic crusade."—Teeling's "*Personal Narrative of the Irish Rebellion*," Sequel, p. 5.

† Teeling's "*Personal Narrative*," p. 86.

‡ "Memoir," by O'Connor, Emmet, and Macneven.

|| The Catholics were not prohibited by law from enrolling themselves among the yeomanry, and the government, in words, allowed of their co-operation; but they were received with so much shyness and aversion by their Protestant comrades and officers that very few of them actually joined the force.

colonel, at the head of a battalion of six hundred. The higher appointments were reserved under the control of the Executive Directory. As soon as a sufficient number of regiments were formed in any county, the colonels were instructed to hand in to the Directory the names of three persons fit, in their opinion, for the post of adjutant-general for that county; of these three the Directory chose one, through whom all military orders were communicated to the officers and men under him. The business of organisation being thus completed, the arming and drilling were next attended to. Every man who could afford it was directed to provide himself with a musket, bayonet, and as much ammunition as he could procure; every other man with a pike, and, if possible, a case of pistols. "In many instances," says the Memoir before quoted, "the lower orders went about to private houses to search for arms. This the executive constantly endeavoured to prevent, because they were unwilling to raise alarm in their adversaries, or let the members of their body acquire habits of plunder and be confounded with robbers. They endeavoured to dissuade them from these acts, by representing to the people that *the arms would always be kept in better condition by the gentlemen than by them, and could be easily seized whenever necessary*. In other respects, our stores were in the arsenal in the Castle and the military *dépôts* throughout the country: our supplies were in the treasury."

The drilling was a more difficult affair: but zeal and resolution surmounted every obstacle:—

"In the neighbourhood of the capital and principal towns, where large bodies could not have assembled without discovery, they separated into very small parties, each of which appointed the most skilful to direct its manœuvres. The most active search was made for persons who had ever been in the military profession, to whom every motive of reward, and rank, and expected glory was held out, and generally with success, to allure them into the association. Under these they met, night after night, to be instructed in the use of arms; sometimes in obscure cellars hired for the purpose, sometimes in houses, where every inhabitant was in the secret. It even sometimes happened that, in the metropolis, these nocturnal exercises took place in the habitations of the more opulent and ardent of the conspirators. In the interior, their evolutions were performed upon a more extensive scale. There, every evening that the moon, the signal of rendezvous, was to be seen in the heavens, the peasant, without reposing from the toils of the day, stole forth with his rude implement of war to pass the night upon the nearest unfrequented heath with the thousands of his comrades, who were assembled at that place and hour, as for the celebration of some unrighteous mysteries. It was also a frequent custom at this time among the lower orders to collect in large bodies, under the pretext of indulging in some of the national games of force, but for the secret purpose of inspiring mutual confidence by the display of their numbers and their athletic forms, and of exercising in those mimic contests the alertness and vigour which they were soon to employ in the real conflict."*

Within six months, Ulster alone had a rebel army of some hundred thousand men, largely supplied with fire-arms and pikes together with some artillery, drilled into a respectable condition of military efficiency, and bound by oath to obey implicitly the orders of commanding officers whose very names were to remain a profound secret until the moment of taking the field.

While the rebel army was getting ready in "obscure cellars" and on "unfrequented heaths," events were in progress elsewhere—in the Luxembourg Palace and in Brest Harbour—whose importance entitles them to a separate chapter of our history.

* "Life of Curran," vol. i., p. 358.

CHAPTER XI.

THEOBALD WOLFE TONE IN FRANCE—THE BANTREY BAY EXPEDITION.

AMONG the individuals implicated in the business of Jackson and Cockayne in the year 1794 was THEOBALD WOLFE TONE, who had been guilty of the terrible indiscretion of drawing up a paper on the political state of Ireland, and the probabilities of success attending a French invasion, copies of which found their way into Jackson's hands. On the arrest of the latter, Tone was in a position of serious danger. His habitual caution had preserved him from committing himself with the English spy; but he was an object of violent suspicion to the government. Jackson might be tempted to save his own life by informing against the dreaded and obnoxious secretary to the Catholics, and a little straining of law and evidence would do the rest. Under these circumstances, Tone acted with good sense and courage. He communicated the whole facts of his situation to some of his aristocratic friends who were high in the confidence of the government,* declaring that "on two points he had made up his mind;"—the first was that he would not fly; the other, that he would never open his lips as a witness either against Rowan or Jackson; that he had no claims on the government, who could ruin him if they pleased,—but that, if it so happened that his ruin was not an object with them, he was ready to expatriate himself and go to America. The efforts of his friends were successful, and an agreement was negotiated on his behalf, by which, without compromising any of his coadjutors in past transactions, or fettering his own course for the future by pledges at variance with his principles, he was assured that, on his simply undertaking to leave Ireland as soon as he could settle his affairs, no proceedings should be taken against him. The agreement was kept on both sides. Tone remained unmolested during the whole period of Jackson's imprisonment and trial, and in the month of June, 1795, sailed for America with his family—to return in the capacity of Adjutant-General in the armies of France.

It is surprising that the Irish government did not on this occasion so far temper their mercy with discretion, as to exact of the retreating conspirator, before his departure, some pledge or promise respecting his future conduct which might have set up the obligation of an honourable engagement as a counterpoise to his eager and treasonable patriotism. Their first plan had been to send him to the East Indies, out of the reach of Irish and European politics; but from some unexplained cause this idea was relinquished, and, with a blind and perilous security, they quietly allowed one of their most determined and active enemies to go at large through the world with all his purposes and resources unimpaired. Of the views with which he left Ireland, Tone gives the following account:—

"A short time before my departure, my friend Russell being in town, he and I walked out together to Rathfarnham, to see Emmet, who has a charming villa there. He showed us a little study, of an elliptical form, which he was building at the bottom of the lawn, and which he said he would consecrate to our meetings if ever we lived to see our

* Marcus Beresford and George Knox.

country emancipated. I begged of him, if he intended Russell should be of the party, in addition to the books and maps it would naturally contain, to fit up a small cellaret which should enclose a few dozens of his best old claret. He showed me that he had not omitted that circumstance, which he acknowledged to be essential, and we both rallied Russell with considerable success. I mention this trifling anecdote because I love the men, and because it seems now at least possible that we may yet meet again in Emmet's study.* As we walked together into town I opened my plan to them both. I told them that I considered my compromise with government to extend no farther than the banks of the Delaware, and that the moment I landed I was free to follow any plan which might suggest itself to me for the emancipation of my country; that undoubtedly I had been guilty of a great offence against the existing government; that, in consequence, I was going into exile, *which I considered as a full expiation for the offence, and therefore felt myself at liberty, having made that sacrifice, to begin again on a fresh score.* They both agreed with me in those principles, and I then proceeded to tell them that my intention was, immediately on my arrival in Philadelphia, to wait on the French minister, to detail to him fully the situation of affairs in Ireland, to endeavour to obtain a recommendation to the French government; and, if I succeeded so far, to leave my family in America, set off instantly for Paris, *and apply, in the name of my country, for the assistance of France, to enable us to assert our independence.* It is unnecessary, I believe, to say that this plan met with the warmest approbation and support from both Russell and Emmet. We shook hands, and having repeated our professions of unalterable regard and esteem for each other, we parted; and this was the last interview which I was so happy as to have with those two invaluable friends together. I remember it was in a little triangular field that this conversation took place; and Emmet remarked to us, that it was in one exactly like it in Switzerland where William Tell and his associates planned the downfall of the tyranny of Austria."

How near the "little triangular field" was to becoming famous in British and European history, and by what strange combination of contingencies it was that the hopes and plans of these patriots were defeated when seemingly on the very eve of their fulfilment, we are now to see.

On the first of August, Tone landed at Wilmington, on the Delaware; and a few days afterwards we find him at Philadelphia, within convenient visiting distance of the French ambassador. He was not altogether in a land of strangers: his government had already commenced the ruinous policy of colonising the United States with Irish fugitives—victims of British oppression and enemies to British rule. He met at Philadelphia an old friend and fellow-patriot, Dr. Reynolds, who had fled from Ireland some months earlier than himself in consequence of being similarly implicated in the affair of Jackson and Cockayne; and six weeks previously, Archibald Hamilton Rowan had arrived there from France. It may be supposed that the three brother refugees had much to tell one another since their last meeting, which had been within the walls of Dublin Newgate, fourteen months before. Rowan and Reynolds cordially approved of Tone's plans; and the next day, with the credentials of Rowan's introduction and two Catholic votes of thanks engrossed on vellum, he waited on the ambassador of the French republic, Citizen Adet. The minister gave the Irish exile a polite reception, but afforded him no definite encouragement. Tone was desired to put his views and opinions about Ireland on paper, in the form of a memorial to the French government; but Adet dissuaded him from embarking for France as he proposed, and would only promise that the memorial should be faithfully transmitted and recommended to ministerial attention. And there the business for the present ended. Tone had done his best, and it did not appear likely that any thing would come of it. Disappointed and disheartened, he resigned

* This was written at Paris, in 1796.

† Memoirs of Theobald Wolfe Tone, vol. i., pp. 180-182.

himself with such resignation as he was master of to the force of circumstances, made up his mind to settle in America, agreed for the purchase of a plantation in New Jersey, took a house at Princeton, and "began to think his lot was cast to be an American farmer."

"In this frame of mind," he says, "I continued for some time, waiting for the lawyer who was employed to draw the deeds, and expecting next spring to remove to my purchase and to begin farming at last, when one day I was roused from my lethargy by the receipt of letters from Keogh, Russell, and the two Simmses, wherein, after professions of the warmest and sincerest regard, they proceeded to acquaint me that *the state of the public mind in Ireland was advancing to republicanism faster than even I could believe*; and they pressed me in the strongest manner to fulfil the engagement I had made with them at my departure, *and to move heaven and earth to force my way to the French government in order to supplicate assistance*. I immediately handed the letters to my wife and sister, and desired their opinion, which I foresaw would be that I should immediately, if possible, set out for France. My wife especially, whose courage and zeal for my honour and interest were not in the least abated by all her past sufferings, supplicated me to let no consideration of her or our children stand for a moment in the way of my engagements to our friends and my duty to my country, adding, that she would answer for our family during my absence, and that the same Providence which had so often, as it were miraculously, preserved us, would, she was confident, not desert us now. My sister joined her in those entreaties, and it may well be supposed I required no great supplication to induce me to make one more attempt in a cause to which I had been so long devoted."*

Accordingly our zealous and true-hearted exile set off the next morning (end of November, 1795) for Philadelphia, and went immediately with his letters to Citizen Adet. Adet, it would seem, had received letters likewise. His previous hesitancy and lukewarmness disappeared, he entered heartily into Tone's projects, and gave him credentials to Paris. Tone settled his affairs in America with the least possible delay; dispatched his brother to Ireland, to carry the news of his intentions to a few of the select patriots, and to inform all the world beside that he was quietly settled down as a New Jersey farmer; spent one day with Reynolds, Rowan, and Napper Tandy; and, on the first of January, 1796, armed with a letter in cypher from Citizen Adet to the *Comité de Salut Public*, set sail from Sandy Hook, bound for Havre de Grace.

Of Tone's proceedings in France, we utterly despair of giving to the reader, by extract or abstract, any idea at all equivalent to that presented by his own animated narrative—one of the most delightful historic memoirs which we possess of that time.† The difficulties which he had to encounter—a solitary exile, without connections, without patrons, without a friend or acquaintance in all France, and scarcely knowing a word of the language—in the execution of a project, which was nothing less than the bringing French statesmen and generals to work out his particular theory

* "Memoirs of Theobald Wolfe Tone," vol. i., p. 195.

† And likewise, incidentally, an admirable picture—among the best we have—of the actual every-day goings-on of things in revolutionised France. Tone arrived in France during the first year of the directorial constitution; when the storm of the reign of terror had spent its fury, and, though the waves were still rolling and rocking, the new order of things was acquiring something like a stable and solid consistence. The temper of the popular mind under the new *regime*, as seen in the theatres, the churches and the streets—the characters of public men, and the modes of doing public business—the effects of the revolutionary crash on the moral and economical condition of the people, are depicted, or suggested, in these memoirs with a vividness that renders them most pleasant reading. The Irish refugee paints things, for the most part, *en beau*—but he paints from the life: his lightest gossip is good material for the historic student.

for the dismemberment of the British empire; the uncertainties, disappointments, and heart-sickening delays that he underwent—kept for months together running about from the American Ambassador to the Foreign Secretary, and from the Secretary to Carnot, and from Carnot to General Clarke and Under-Secretary Madgett; the world of ignorance and prejudice that he had to work his way through, before he could bring the plainest facts of Irish politics to bear on the understandings and volitions of French statesmen;* and the issue of the whole in a success better than the best of his hopes, and a failure worse than his gloomiest fears: these together, make one of the most interesting episodes in the history of the time of which we write. As it is, however, only an episode—detached, for the most part, from the course of events in Ireland—we must pass over it slightly and briefly.

On presenting himself with his credentials to the Foreign Minister, De la Croix, as in his more familiar conversations with the Minister's Under-Secretary, Madgett, Tone received abundant encouragement, in general terms. He was told that the French government considered the object of his mission as of the greatest importance, that their attention was most seriously turned towards Ireland, and that there was every reason to expect that an effort would be made in that quarter—their feeling being that, "*unless they could separate Ireland from England, the latter was invulnerable*;" and he proceeded diligently, with a good heart of hope, in the preparation of memorials on the state of Ireland for the perusal of the Directory. But when it came to a question of details, he was mortified to find a wide and most material difference between the views of the French government and his own, as to the kind and degree of exertion requisite. The following shows the extent of his plan, and the difficulties he had to overcome:—

"February 22.—Finished my memorial, and delivered a fair copy, signed, to Madgett, for the Minister of Foreign Relations. Madgett in the horrors. He tells me he has had a discourse yesterday for two hours with the Minister, and that the succours he expects will fall very short of what he thought. That the marine of France is in such a state that government will not hazard a large fleet, and consequently that we must be content to steal a march; that they will give 2000 of their best troops, and arms for 20,000; that they cannot spare Pichegru nor Jourdan; that they will give any quantity of artillery, and, I think he added, what money might be necessary. To all this I answered, that *as to 2000 men, they might as well send 20*. That with regard to myself, I would go if they would send but a corporal's guard; but that my opinion was, *that 5000 was as little as could be landed with any prospect of success*, and that that number would leave the matter doubtful; *that if there could be an imposing force sent in the first instance, it would overbear all opposition, the nation would be unanimous, and an immense effusion of blood and treasure spared*—the law of opinion would at once operate in favour of the government which, in that case, would be instantly formed; and I pressed particularly the advantages resulting from this last circumstance. He seemed perfectly satisfied with my arguments, but equally satisfied that it would not, or rather could not, be done. I then bade him remember that my plan was built on the supposition of a powerful support in the first instance; that I had particularly specified so in my memorial, and begged him to apprise the minister that my decided opinion was so; *that nevertheless, with 5000 men, the business might be attempted, and I did believe would succeed, but that in that case we must fight hard for it*; that, though I was satisfied how the militia and army would act in case of a powerful invasion, I could not venture to say what might be their conduct under the

* E. g., he had the utmost difficulty in getting the Minister of War, General Clarke, to understand that there was no great probability of Lord Chancellor Fitzgibbon aiding an insurrection against the Irish government.

circumstances he mentioned; that if they stood by the government, which it was possible they might, we should have hot work of it; *that if 5000 men were sent, they should be the very flower of the French troops, and a considerable proportion of them artillerymen, with the best general they could spare.* He interrupted me to ask who was known in Ireland after Pichegru and Jourdan. I answered *Hoche, especially since his affair of Quiberon.* He said he was sure we might have Hoche. I also mentioned, that if they sent but 5000 men, they should send a greater quantity of arms, as in that case we could not command at once all the arms of the nation, as we should if they were able to send 20,000, or even 15,000. He promised to represent all this, and that he hoped we should get 5000 men at least, and a greater quantity of arms. We then parted. Now, what is to be my plan? Suppose we get 5000 men, and 30,000 or even 20,000 stand of arms, and a train of artillery, I conceive, in the first place, the embarkation must be from Holland; but, in all events, *the landing must be in the north, as near Belfast as possible.* Had we 20,000, or even 15,000, in the first instance, we should begin with the capital, the seizing of which would secure everything; but, as it is, if we cannot go large, we must go close-hauled, as the saying is. With 5000 we must proceed entirely on a revolutionary plan I fear (that is to say, reckon only on the Sansculottes), and, if necessary, put every man, horse, guinea, and potatoe in Ireland in requisition. I should also conceive that it would be our policy at first to avoid an action, supposing the Irish army stuck to the government. Every day would strengthen and discipline us, and give us opportunities to work upon them. *With 5000 men, and very strong measures, we should ultimately succeed. The only difference between that number and 20,000 is, that with the latter there would be no fighting, and with this we may have some hard knocks.* Oh, good God! good God! what would I give to-night that we were safely landed, and encamped on the Cave Hill. If we can find our way so far, I think we shall puzzle John Bull to work us out. Surely we can do as much as the Chouans or people of La Vendée.*

Discouraged and anxious, Tone went back to his first friend the American Ambassador, and opened his heart to him without reserve. Monroe gave him good advice—viz., to drop the “subaltern way of doing business,” and deal only with principals—to have done with De la Croix and Madgett, and go at once straight to the *Directoire Executif*. It was a bold step to take, but a wise one, with a man like Carnot in the Directory. On the next day (February 24th) we find Tone going, “at twelve o’clock, in a fright to the Luxembourg, conning speeches in execrable French all the way:”—

“What shall I say to Carnot? Well, ‘whatsoever the Lord putteth in my mouth, that surely shall I utter.’ Plucked up a spirit as I drew near the Palace, and mounted the stairs like a lion; went into the first bureau that I found open, and demanded at once to see Carnot. The clerks stared a little, but I repeated my demand with a courage truly heroic, on which they instantly submitted, and sent a person to conduct me. This happened to be his day for giving audience, which each member of the Executive Directory does in his turn. Introduced by my guide into the ante-chamber, which was filled with people, the officers of state all in their new costume. Wrote a line in English, and delivered it to one of the Huissiers, stating that a stranger just arrived from America wished to speak to Citizen Carnot on an affair of consequence. He brought me an answer in two minutes, that I should have an audience. The folding-doors were now thrown open, a bell being previously rung to give notice to the people that all who had business might present themselves, and Citizen Carnot appeared, in the petit-costume of white satin with crimson robe, richly embroidered. It is very elegant, and resembles almost exactly the draperies of Vandyke. He went round the room receiving papers, and answering those who addressed him. I told my friend the Huissier, in marvellous French, that my business was too important to be transacted there, and that I would return on another day, when it would not be Carnot’s turn to give audience, and when I should hope to find him at leisure. He mentioned this to Carnot, who ordered me instantly to be shown into an inner apartment, and said he would see me as soon as the audience was over. That I thought looked well, and I began accordingly to con my speech again. In the apartment were five or six personages, who

* Ibid., pp. 229-232.

being, like myself, of great distinction, were admitted to a private audience. I allowed them all precedence, as I wanted to have my will of Carnot; and while they were in their turn speaking with him, I could not help reflecting how often I had wished for the opportunity I then enjoyed, what schemes I had laid, what hazards I had run. When I looked round and saw myself actually in the cabinet of the Executive Directory, *vis-à-vis* Citizen Carnot, the 'organiser of victory,' I could hardly believe my own senses, and felt as if it were all a dream. However, I was not in the least degree disconcerted, and when I presented myself, after the rest were dismissed, I had all my faculties, such as they were, as well at my command as on any occasion in my life. I began the discourse by saying, in horrible French, that I had been informed he spoke English. 'A little, sir; but I perceive you speak French, and, if you please, we will converse in that language.' I answered, still in my jargon, that if he could have the patience to endure me I would endeavour, and only prayed him to stop me whenever I did not make myself understood. I then told him I was an Irishman; that I had been secretary and agent to the Catholics of that country, who were about 3,000,000 of people; that I was also in perfect possession of the sentiments of the Dissenters, who were at least 900,000; and that I wished to communicate with him on the actual state of Ireland. He stopped me here to express a doubt as to the numbers being so great as I represented. I answered, a calculation had been made within these few years, grounded on the number of houses, which was ascertained for purposes of revenue; that, by that calculation, the people of Ireland amounted to 4,100,000, and which was acknowledged to be considerably under the truth. He seemed a little surprised at this, and I proceeded to state that all those people were unanimous in their sentiments in favour of France, and eager to throw off the yoke of England. He asked me then 'What they wanted?' I said, 'An armed force in the commencement, for a *point d'appui*, until they can organise themselves; and undoubtedly a supply of arms, and some money.' I added, that I had already delivered in a memorial on the subject to the Minister of Foreign Relations, and that I was preparing another, which would explain to him in detail all that I knew, better than could be done in conversation. He then said, 'We shall see those memorials.' The 'organiser of victory' proceeded to ask me, '*Are there not some strong places in Ireland?*' I answered, 'I knew of none, except some works to defend the harbour of Cork.' He stopped me here, exclaiming, '*Aye, Cork! But may it not be necessary to land there?*'—by which question I perceived he had been organising a little already in his own mind. I answered, I thought not. That if a landing in force were attempted, it would be better near the capital, for obvious reasons; if with a small army, it should be in the north rather than the south of Ireland, for reasons which he would find in my memorials. He then asked me, 'Might there not be some danger or delay in a longer navigation?' I answered, it would not make a difference of two days, which was nothing in comparison of the advantages. I then told him that I came to France by the direction and concurrence of the men who (and here I was at a loss for a French word, with which, seeing my embarrassment, he supplied me) guided the two great parties I had mentioned. This satisfied me clearly that he attended to and understood me. I added, that I had presented myself in August last, in Philadelphia, to Citizen Adet, and delivered to him such credentials as I had with me; that he did not at that juncture think it advisable for me to come in person, but offered to transmit a memorial, which I accordingly delivered to him. That about the end of November last I received letters from my friends in Ireland, repeating their instructions in the strongest manner that I should, if possible, force my way to France, and lay the situation of Ireland before its government. That, in consequence, I had again waited on Citizen Adet, who seemed eager to assist me, and offered me a letter to the *Directoire Exécutif*, which I accepted with gratitude. That I sailed from America in the very first vessel, and had arrived about a fortnight; that I had delivered my letter to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, who had ordered me to explain myself without reserve to Citizen Madgett, which I had accordingly done. That by his advice I had prepared and delivered one memorial on the actual state of Ireland, and was then at work on another, which would comprise the whole of the subject. That I had the highest respect for the Minister; and that as to Madgett, I had no reason whatsoever to doubt him; but, nevertheless, must be permitted to say, that in my mind it was a business of too great importance to be transacted with a mere *Commis*. That I should not think I had discharged my duty, either to France or Ireland, if I left any measure unattempted which might draw the attention of the Directory to the situation of the latter country; and that, in consequence, I had presumed to present myself to him, and to implore his attention to the facts contained in my two memorials. That I should also presume to

request that, if any doubt or difficulty arose in his mind on any of those facts, he would have the goodness to permit me to explain. I concluded by saying, that I looked upon it as a favourable omen that I had been allowed to communicate with him, as he was perfectly well known by reputation in Ireland, and was the very man of whom my friends had spoken. He shook his head and smiled, as if he doubted me a little. I assured him the fact was so; and, as a proof, told him that in Ireland we all knew three years ago that he could speak English, at which he did not seem displeased. I then rose, and after the usual apologies took my leave.

"Here is a full and true account of my first audience with the Executive Directory of France, in the person of Citizen Carnot, the 'organiser of victory.' I think I came off very clear. What am I to infer from all this? As yet I have met with no difficulty nor check, nothing to discourage me; but I wish with such extravagant passion for the emancipation of my country, and *I do so abhor and detest the very name of England*, that I doubt my own judgment, lest I see things in too favourable a light. I hope I am doing my duty. It is a bold measure; after all, if it should succeed, and my visions be realised—Huzza! *Vive la Republique!*"*

This was a grand point gained. And two days afterwards De la Croix raised his hopes higher still, by assuring him that "there was no object nearer the heart of the Executive Directory than the separation of Ireland from England, and her establishment as an independent republic in alliance with France; that they had that business at that very moment before them, and would leave no means consistent with their utmost capacity untried to accomplish it." But, however near the object might be to the heart of the Executive Directory, it was far indeed from an actual accomplishment. Poor Tone had to go through many a weary month of anxiety and harassment before he could see or credibly hear of a thing being done towards bringing the affair to a practical bearing. Disheartened by the apparent inertness of the government, and the impossibility of getting any definite answer to his memorials; ignorant even whether those memorials had been so much as read; teased by the ridiculous crotchets of General Clarke (who unfortunately had once been in Ireland, and presumed that he knew the country and its politics as well as Tone himself), and by the eternal "good news" of the "terribly sanguine" and conceited Madgett, to whom the higher powers had handed him over; worried out of all patience by having again and again to go over the same ground of fact and argument, without making the slightest impression; perplexed by contradictory reports; depressed by a life of enforced solitude and inaction, and every now and then chagrined beyond measure to find that the secret of his mission was oozing out through most untrustworthy channels; the very ground-work of all his hopes shaken by news from Ireland of the successive arrests of the men on whose exertions he had most relied—no wonder that he exclaims, "*Unhappy is the man or the nation whose destiny depends on the will of another.*" His only comfort was hearing from time to time how "Bonaparte, a Corsican," was beating the Austrians out of Italy. On the 2nd of May, "literally tired of his life," he went to Carnot again; was admitted, but was obliged to content himself with the very humble satisfaction of finding that the Director "recollected him perfectly." Information he could get none, except that the government meant to send a person to Ireland to observe and report, and that *if* the expedition were undertaken, he should be allowed to bear a part in it. He parted from Carnot with the belief "that as yet there is no one step taken in the business, and that, in fact, the expedition will not be undertaken."

* Ibid., p. 238 et seq.

Tone was as much mistaken in this belief as in his previous sanguine anticipations. At that very time some most important steps were taking in the business, and it was soon put past all doubt that the expedition would be undertaken. On the 23rd of June he called on General Clarke, who told him that "he was at liberty to acquaint him so far as that *the business, and even the time, were determined on by the Directory, and the manner only remained under discussion.*" And a few days afterwards he learned with delight and surprise that the government *had a communication open with Ireland*; that they had recently received a letter stating that "fourteen of the counties, including the entire North, were completely organised for the purpose of throwing off the English yoke, and that in the remaining eighteen the organisation was advancing rapidly"—in fine, that the expedition would certainly and soon be undertaken, and that General Hoche would have the conduct of it.

The history of this "communication open with Ireland" is explained in the previously-quoted "Memoir of the Origin and Progress of the Irish Union," by O'Connor, Emmet, and Macneven. The passage has value, as being the final manifesto of the United Irishmen against their government:—

"About the middle of 1798" (it was in May), "a meeting of the Executive took place, more important in its discussions and its consequences than any that had preceded it. As such, we have thought ourselves bound to give an account of it with the most perfect frankness, and more than ordinary precision. This meeting took place in consequence of a letter from one of the society* who had emigrated on account of political opinions. It mentioned that the state of the country had been represented to the government of France in so favourable a point of view as to induce them to resolve upon invading Ireland, for the purpose of enabling it to separate itself from Great Britain. On this solemn and important occasion, a serious review was taken of the state of the Irish nation at that period. It was observed that a desperate ferment existed in the public mind. A resolution in favour of a parliamentary reform had, indeed, been passed early in 1793 by the House of Commons, but it had been frustrated by several successive adjournments; all hope of its attainment was vanished, and its friends every where proscribed; the Volunteers were put down; all power of meeting by delegation for any political purpose (the mode in which it was most usual and expedient to co-operate on any subject of importance) was taken away at the same time. The provocations of the year 1794, the recall of Lord Fitzwilliam, and the re-assumption of coercive measures that followed it, were strongly dwelt on. The county of Armagh had been long desolated by two contending factions, agreeing only in one thing—an opinion that most of the active magistrates in that county treated one party with the most fostering kindness, and the other with the most rigorous persecution. It was stated that so marked a partiality exasperated the sufferers and those who sympathised in their misfortunes. It was urged with indignation that, notwithstanding the greatness of the military establishment in Ireland, and its having been able to suppress the Defenders in various counties, it was not able or was not employed to suppress those outrages in that county which drove seven thousand persons from their native dwellings. The magistrates, who took no steps against the Orangemen, were said to have overleaped the boundaries of law to pursue and punish the Defenders. The government seemed to take on themselves those injuries by the Indemnity Act—and even honoured the violators—and by the Insurrection Act, which enabled the same magistrates, if they chose, under colour of law, to act anew the same abominations. Nothing, it was contended, could more justly excite the spirit of resistance and determine men to appeal to arms, than the Insurrection Act. It punished with death the administering of oaths which, in their opinion, were calculated for the most virtuous and honourable purposes. The power of proclaiming counties, and quieting them by breaking open the cabins of the peasants between sunset and sunrise, by seizing the inmates, and sending them on board tenders, without the ordinary interposition of a trial by jury, had, it was alleged,

* Tone.

irritated beyond endurance the minds of the reflecting and the feelings of the unthinking inhabitants of that province. It was contended that, even according to the constitution and example of 1688, *when the protection of the constituted authorities was withdrawn from the subject, allegiance, the reciprocal duty, ceased to bind*; when the wrongs of the people were not redressed, they had a right to resist, and were free to seek for allies wherever they were to be found. *The English revolutionists of 1688 called in the aid of a foreign republic to overthrow their oppressors. There had sprung up in our own time a much more mighty republic, which, by its offers of assistance to break the chains of slavery, had drawn on itself a war with the enemies of our freedom, and now particularly tendered us its aid. These arguments prevailed; and it was resolved to employ the proffered assistance for the purpose of separation.* We were aware it was suspected that negotiations between the United Irishmen and the French were carried on at an earlier period than that now alluded to: but we solemnly declare such suspicion was ill-founded. In consequence of this determination of the Executive, *an agent was dispatched to the French Directory, who acquainted them with it, stated the dispositions of the people, and the measures which caused them. He received fresh assurances that the succours should be sent as soon as the armament could be got ready.*"

The "agent" was Lord Edward Fitzgerald, who, accompanied by Arthur O'Connor, proceeded to Switzerland in the month of June, and had an interview near the French frontier with General Hoche. The result of that interview was that the French Directory were fully satisfied of the trustworthiness of Tone and his views of Irish affairs, and it was determined, once for all, that the thing should be done with all possible speed, and on a large scale. On the 12th of July, Tone was introduced to Hoche at the Luxembourg, and had the infinite satisfaction of finding that his views were fully adopted by the government, especially with regard to the important point of the amount of force required for the object. The general "*would come in full force, and bring great quantities of arms, ammunition, stores, and artillery, and, for his own reputation, see that all the arrangements were made on a proper scale.*"*

Still, it was a long way from Luxembourg Palace to the British Channel. Five weary months intervened before the armament could be got ready for sailing. The marine department could not, or would not, work at all well with the military; every possible device of obstruction and procrastination was employed, in an underhand way, to retard the expedition; and an admiral (Villaret Joyeuse) had to be cashiered before any business could be got on with.† But Hoche and the Directory were thoroughly in earnest, and at last all was ready. On the 16th of December, 1796, the expedition sailed from Brest Harbour. It consisted of 17 ships of the line, 13 frigates, 7 corvettes, and 6 transports—in all 43 sail—with 15,000 soldiers (mostly the veterans of La Vendée), 41,000 stand of arms, 29 pieces of artillery, 61,000 barrels of powder, and 7,000,000 ball cartridges. A worthy reward it was of ten months' toil and harassment.

The sailing of this splendid armament—the safe landing of which, anywhere in the north of Ireland, would undoubtedly, at that time, have severed Ireland from Great Britain—was the last of Tone's successes.

* Tone's "Memoirs," vol. ii., p. 17.

† One of the Admirals, Bruix, when remonstrated with by Hoche for the interminable and inexplicable delays of the naval preparations, gave for a reason that *some of the charts must be washed in water colours, which would take two days.* Tone says, "the general thinks the marine are trifling with him, on purpose to gain time until the bad weather sets in."—The *gold of Pitt* has been charged with these tricky procrastinations of the Brest marine. Perhaps a simpler solution of the mystery would be the true one—there was a British fleet in the Channel.

From the afternoon of the 16th of December, all was one tissue and complication of disasters. That same night, in passing through the Raz, a dangerous and difficult strait at the mouth of Brest harbour (avoided in ordinary navigation even by single ships), a seventy-four struck on the rocks and was lost; and the next morning they found themselves only eighteen sail in company, instead of forty-three. What was worst of all, among the missing twenty-five was the *Fraternité*, with Hoche and the Admiral on board. Sixteen of their lost companions rejoined them on the 19th, but no *Fraternité* was to be seen or heard of. After another separation and another re-junction (French ships of war sail better now), they arrived on the morning of the 21st off Cape Clear, and in a few hours more reached the mouth of Bantry Bay, the appointed rendezvous of the armament in case of separation—thirty-five sail in company, with fine weather and a fair wind, and nothing to desire except the presence of General Hoche, or a man of spirit and decision in his place. Well for Great Britain that the general next in command happened to be no other than that same *Grouchy* whose want of spirit and decision did her so good service at Waterloo. "All rests now," says Tone, "upon Grouchy; I hope he may turn out well. He has a glorious game in his hands, if he has spirits and talent to play it; if he succeeds, it will immortalise him." But Grouchy did not turn out well, and is immortalised otherwise than by success. As at Waterloo he made the mistake of keeping his commander too long waiting for him, in Bantry Bay he made the mistake of waiting too long for his commander. His instructions were, in the event of a separation of the fleet, to cruise about for five days; and he set himself accordingly to obey his instructions with a most stoical defiance of consequences. "There cannot be imagined," exclaims poor Tone, "a situation more provokingly tantalizing than mine at this moment: within view, almost within reach, of my native land, and uncertain whether I shall ever set my foot on it. We are now (nine o'clock, December 21st) at the rendezvous appointed; stood in for the coast till twelve, when we were near enough to toss a biscuit ashore; at twelve tacked and stood out again; so now *we have begun our cruise of five days in all its forms, and shall, in obedience to the letter of our instructions, ruin the expedition, and destroy the remnant of the French navy*, with a precision and punctuality which will be truly edifying. We opened Bantry Bay, and in all my life rage never entered so deeply into my heart as when we turned our backs on the coast."

After three days of this folly, with two more separations, Grouchy yielded (December 24th) to the urgent expostulations and entreaties of his *Etat Major*, and gave orders for the immediate disembarkation of the remnant of the forces—reduced now to 6,500 men, without a guinea, without a tent, without a horse, with nothing but the arms in their hands, the clothes on their backs, and a good courage. "We purpose to make a race for Cork, as if the devil were in our bodies; and when we are fairly there, we will stop for a day or two to take breath and look about us." But it was too late. One hour and a half of fair wind would have effected their object; but the fair wind had blown itself all away three days before. That day, and the next, and the next after that, it blew a gale from the east. On the 27th, a last desperate project for working round to the Shannon, in hope of rejoining some of their scattered companions,

was frustrated by a hurricane, which separated them again (for the sixth time); and on the morning of the 29th the commodore made the signal to steer for France. They reached Brest in safety, on New Year's-day, 1797, seven sail in all—not having seen, nor been seen by, their general and admiral once during the whole voyage.

Thus ended, by a series of disasters and blunders on which Great Britain had no right whatever to count, an enterprise more formidable to her power than any that had been attempted by the boldest of her enemies since the Spanish Armada. We have no taste, in general, for hypothetical predictions of what *would* have happened *if* such and such other things had happened; but it is a safe conjecture—almost beyond a conjecture—that, had Hoche and his fifteen thousand veterans been able at that time to get themselves landed in any part of Ireland *except the south*,* the result could have been no other than an Hibernian republic. The government was utterly unprepared for their reception, treated the first rumours of a French descent with scornful derision, as the “frenzy of common fame,” and was thrown into absolute dismay by the announcement of the fact.† Not a ship nor a regiment was ready to receive the invaders.‡ For five days in that month of December, 1796, a French fleet

* Munster was at this period the only province of Ireland not deeply leavened with Defenderism or United Irishism. The peasantry were loyal and anti-Gallican to a man; and had the landing in Bantry Bay been effected, the expectation of native co-operation would have been utterly disappointed, and the object of the invasion most probably frustrated. These poor creatures behaved themselves all through that week of public and ministerial panic, in a way that ought, from that time thenceforth and for evermore (were there gratitude in governments), to have opened a new era in Irish legislation and politics. The Lord-Lieutenant writes to the Duke of Portland on the 10th of January, 1797:—“During the march of our troops, the utmost attention was paid them by the inhabitants of the towns and villages through which they passed; so that in many places the meat provided by the commissariat was not consumed. The roads, which in parts had been rendered impassable by the snow, were cleared by the peasantry. The poor people often shared their potatoes with them, and dressed their meat without demanding payment.” Such was Catholic peasant loyalty after a century of Protestant and landlord oppression. Its reward was—an honourable mention in the *Dublin Gazette* that year, and martial law the next.

It must be remembered that the landing in Bantry Bay was no part of the first design of the expedition, but only an after-thought, arising out of the failure of the original plan. Dr. Madden says, on the authority of Arthur O'Connor (United Irishmen, Second Series, vol. ii., p. 296), “The place of the intended debarkment of Hoche's expedition has never transpired; the knowledge of it was confined to Hoche and O'Connor.”

† See a curious anecdote in illustration of the ministerial panic, in Teeling's “Personal Narrative,” p. 69.

‡ It was thought strange that, with the British government's means of obtaining information and unscrupulousness in the use of them, it remained ignorant of the destination of the formidable armament which had been for months preparing in Brest harbour—so ignorant, that the French fleet *did not see an English ship of war either in going or returning*. The fact is, the sagacity of the British cabinet over-reached itself. On its being made known to Hoche that “a gentleman with a foreign accent” had been calling on the government printer at Brest, with the offer of a large bribe for a copy of the proclamation which it was foreseen that the general would publish wheresoever he might be bound, Hoche drew up an amended proclamation, with “*Portugal*” and “*Portuguese*” substituted for “*Ireland*” and “*Irish*,” had a few copies struck off, and allowed the gentleman with the foreign accent to obtain possession of one, taking care to have the real proclamation printed elsewhere. The result of the *ruse* was that Sir John Colpoys, the English admiral, just at the critical moment drew off his fleet from the Brest station, where he had been for several weeks watching the movements of

was suffered to lie in an Irish haven without the smallest molestation. The British empire escaped dismemberment—because the wind blew hard, and the ship *Fraternité* was not a good sailer.

If any British statesmen or politicians, in these days of steam navigation, dream of permanently holding Ireland in connection with Great Britain by other ties than those of just and good government, we pray them to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest the “Memoirs of Theobald Wolfe Tone.”

CHAPTER XII.

IRELAND IN 1797—THE LAST OF CONCILIATION AND REFORM—SECESSION OF THE WHIG OPPOSITION—PROGRESS OF THE UNITED IRISHMEN—GENERAL LAKE’S PROCLAMATION—MARTIAL LAW IN ULSTER—SECRET COMMITTEE—INFORMER NEWELL—THE DISARMING OF ULSTER—“THE SPORT OF MAN-HUNTING”—NECESSARY ACTS OF COERCION—THE UNITED IRISHMEN AT THE CLOSE OF 1797—ALLIANCE WITH THE DEFENDERS—“REMEMBER ORR.”

THE failure of Hoche’s expedition opened one last chance for the conciliation of Ireland. The circumstances of that attempt at invasion were every way fitted to act both on the prudence and the generosity of any government possessing a particle of either quality. Abortive as the attempt proved, its failure was fortuitous—the work mainly of the elements; and accident could scarcely be relied on to defend the British empire twice. At all events, French invasion was now demonstrated to be not impossible. The boasted guardianship of the wooden walls had turned out not to be infallible; the British Isles were not absolutely inaccessible to hostile fleets. For one entire fortnight the coasts of Ireland had lain at the mercy of an invading enemy; and what had been once might be again. The noble behaviour of the Munster peasantry, too, during the five days that the French were hourly expected to land, invited concession and conciliation. It showed that the assumption on which the whole fabric of coercive and penal legislation rested was a fallacy; the millions were loyal at heart, after all. With a people in such a temper, concession would have conciliated; it would have come with a good grace—not

the French marine, and left the coast of Ireland at the mercy of the enemy during a whole fortnight.

The evidence given by the United Irish leaders before the Secret Committee of 1798 shows that the counsels of the Union, like those of the government, were deranged by false and contradictory intelligence. When Emmet was asked by the committee, “How do you account for the people being so loyal and well-disposed while the French were in Bantry Bay?” he replied, “About November, 1796, a messenger arrived here from France, who stated that a descent would immediately be made with 15,000 men. In a very few days after this messenger had quitted Ireland on his return, a letter arrived which was considered as authentic by the Irish Executive, stating that the expedition was deferred till spring. This contradiction threw the Executive off their guard, in consequence of which no measures were taken to prepare the people for the reception of the French army.”

as a reluctant surrender of weakness and fear to popular turbulence, but as the free-will acknowledgment of popular loyalty. For the Popish peasants, that shared their potatoes with the king's troops, and harnessed themselves in droves to drag the king's guns through mountain passes (snow-drifts notwithstanding), something surely might be done by the king's government, without any compromise either of dignity or of Protestantism.

The event of the Bantry Bay expedition had its lessons for the United Irishmen likewise, and was well suited to dispose the most eager and sanguine of them to moderation and compromise. The northern middle-class republicans now discovered, much to their surprise, that they were not so strong as they had imagined; that the national unanimity on which they had fondly calculated did not exist; that the millions would, when it came to a practical question, be not with them (as they had too easily taken for granted), but against them; that the instinct of loyalty was still rooted in the heart of the peasant population, all penal codes, potato-tithe, Whiteboy and Insurrection Acts notwithstanding. Nor were they altogether clear what would have been the result of the success of an invasion of foreign sympathisers. Separation from Great Britain, certainly: an Hibernian republic, probably;—but national independence, possibly not. The expedition was on a scale far beyond the expectations of the most sanguine among them, and the wishes of the more considerate. Their demand was, *not fewer than five thousand men, nor more than ten thousand*. With fifteen thousand of the best soldiers of France, and a general like Hoche, they might have found themselves too strong. The republic was not always scrupulously tender of the liberties of the nations whom she liberated. Those who came as deliverers, might have staid as conquerors; and at any rate, demands would have been made on Irish gratitude inconsistent with Irish pride and independence. Considerations of this kind disposed many of the patriot leaders at this period to recede from the extreme of their previous political aspirations, and try once more for that legal and constitutional reform which, however defective in theory, would have been practically a large and substantial instalment of justice to Ireland. On the 2nd of January, 1797, a public meeting was held at Belfast, in which O'Connor, Sampson, and others of the northern leaders took part, when it was resolved,—

“That the imperfect state of the representation in the House of Commons is the primary cause of the discontent at present existing in the country:

“That the public mind would be restored to tranquillity, and every impending danger effectually averted, by such a reform in parliament as would secure to population and property their due weight in the scale of government, without distinction on account of religious opinion:

“That a determination, firmly manifested on the part of government, to comply with the just desires of the people, would have the happiest effect in conciliating the affections of the people, whose object is reform alone; and thereby constitute the only rampart of defence that can bid complete defiance to the efforts of foreign and domestic enemies:

“That we can conceive a government by King, Lords, and Commons (the Commons being thus reformed), when wisely and honestly administered, capable of affording every happiness a nation can enjoy.”

A similar meeting was held in Dublin by Emmet and his friends, and amicable communications were opened with some of the members of the Whig Opposition in parliament.

There can scarcely be a doubt but that at this time the pacification of Ireland might have been effected, had the government honestly desired it. The United Irish leaders were in a mood for compromise and equitable adjustment. In their overtures to the Whigs they had abstained from pressing the obnoxious points of annual parliaments and universal suffrage, and any considerable and substantial concession would have tranquillised, if not contented, a large proportion of the agitators. O'Connor, Emmet, and Macneven say, in their "Memoir on the Origin and Progress of the Union"—

"If in the course of that effort for reform it had not become evident that success was hopeless, it was the wish of many among the United Irishmen, and the Executive would have gladly embraced the occasion of declining to hold any further intercourse with France, except sending a messenger there to tell them that the difference between the government and the people had been adjusted, and that they would have no business a second time to attempt a landing."

For a while, it seemed as if an adjustment were likely to be effected. Reports were circulated and believed that the British cabinet had determined on conciliatory measures. Catholic emancipation and "temperate reform" were again talked of. The resignation of Lord Camden was rumoured; and, what was best of all, it became known that the popular and liberal Prince of Wales had besought his royal father to send him to Ireland as Lord Lieutenant, with Earl Moira as Commander-in-Chief, and had expressed a most decided opinion to Mr. Pitt in favour of a system of conciliation. But the pleasing prospect—like all other pleasing prospects which our history has opened—was destined to be of but brief continuance. Conciliation was not desired by the cabinet of either country. The government of Ireland was in the hands of a faction that *wished the people would rebel, that ministers might see the rebellion and crush it*;* and the offer of the heir apparent to the crown, to tranquillise by justice and mercy a third part of the empire, was rejected. "*First subdue, and then reform*," was the ministerial answer to the Whig minority in parliament when, in the course of the ensuing session, the question of reform was re-opened. It was the last time of asking. A majority of four to one responded AYE to this programme of coercive and cruel policy: and Grattan and the Whigs, disgusted and despairing, seceded from the House of Commons.

The prospect of returning tranquillity with which the year commenced was too slight and transient to have any practical effect on the general state of the country. It did not produce even a suspension or mitigation of the disorders which then rent the entire north of Ireland. The government went on pouring troops into the country from England and Scotland, arming and disciplining the Orange yeomanry, arresting the people on suspicion, imprisoning without bail, and transporting without trial, and sanctioning by connivance every description of magisterial oppression and military insolence.† The misdoings were not all on one side. Terror was met by terror, and outrage answered to outrage. The United Irish-

* Speech of Mr. John Claudius Beresford, March 20, 1797.

† Early in the year, a party of musqueteers attacked the office of the *Northern Star* (Samuel Neilson's paper), at Belfast. They broke into the house, destroyed the presses, threw the types into the street, and lodged the printers in gaol. Redress or compensation was, of course, not a thing to be thought of.

men continued their military exercisings and drillings, till, in April, they had (on paper at least) an organised force of a hundred thousand men. They, too, intimidated, plundered, and murdered, after the example of their rulers, and for a while with equal or superior efficiency. The Report of the Secret Committee of 1798 says, with reference to this period—

“To deter the well-affected from joining the yeomanry corps, and to render the administration of justice altogether ineffectual, *the most active system of terror was put in operation.* Persons enrolled in the yeomanry, magistrates, witnesses, jurors—in a word, every class and description of people who ventured to support the laws—became objects of the most cruel persecution in their persons, property, and even in the line of their business; and multitudes were compelled to take illegal oaths, and profess an adherence to the party, as a means of security.

“In the latter end of 1796 and beginning of 1797, the loyal inhabitants of Ulster suffered most severely from the depredations of the United Irishmen. Throughout the province they were stripped of their arms. The most horrid murders were perpetrated by large bodies of men in open day; and it became nearly impossible to bring the offenders to justice, from the inevitable destruction that awaited the witnesses or jurors who dared to perform their duty.”

The above statement is founded on fact, though the facts have lost nothing in the hands of the Secret Committee. The truth is, the “loyal inhabitants of Ulster” were now in the minority. The Report omits to state that the loyal inhabitants had begun the “active system of terror,” of which these United Irish outrages were but the natural reaction; and is altogether silent on the subject of the “depredations and horrid murders” of the Orange exterminators, offenders whom it had been found quite impossible to bring to justice.

The active system of terror met, for a time, with considerable success. During the spring assizes of this year the crown prosecutions very generally failed. Witnesses would not swear up to hanging point, juries would not convict, and the confidence and zeal of the Unionists were greater than ever. Intimidation seems to have been reinforced by bribery. The Report already quoted states that—

“Entries of money appear in their proceedings, as paid to procure, as well as to buy off, witnesses; in many cases to gaolers, for being guilty of breaches of trust; and even to under-sheriffs, for returning partial panels. Handbills to intimidate jurors were circulated, and every species of indecent management was practised in the courts to exclude from the jury-box persons unconnected with their party.”*

* As reports of secret committees are not always trustworthy historical documents, it may be well to add that the papers of the United Irishmen actually do contain some suspicious entries, corroborative, so far as they go, of the above charge. In one memorandum of their proceedings (dated “County of Down Committee, June 8th, 1797”), we find the following items of “costs of the law :”—

Gaoler	10 guineas.
Two Assistants.....	£20 each.
Sub-Sheriff	20 guineas.
Witnesses	£200.”

And in another (April 14th, 1797), an entry of £498. 4s. 0½d. “to counsel and witnesses” is prefaced with the significant notice—“We have had a great deal of trouble at the last assizes; the *expense was immense*; they have ended with honour to the people.—See Appendix xiv. to the Report of 1798.

The information given in this Appendix is stated to have been furnished by “Nicholas Maguan, of Saintfield, in the county of Down, who was himself a member of the provincial and county committees, and also a colonel in the military system of the United Irishmen. He was present at each of the meetings of which an account is here given, and from time to time, immediately after each meeting, communicated what passed thereat to the Rev. John

Altogether, the spring of 1797 appears to have been the period—as regards Ulster, the most important of the four provinces—when the United Irish system had attained its highest point of vigour. The organisation, civil and military, was extensive and efficient; the zeal and confidence of the people were unbounded: their leaders had the utmost difficulty in persuading them to wait for the arrival of the French, before hazarding a general insurrection; and the temper of a large proportion of the native militia regiments was such, that their co-operation, in the event of a rising, was confidently reckoned on by the patriots.* The government was frightened, and felt the necessity of stronger measures. That fatal and wicked policy which, interrupted only by the brief administration of Earl Fitzwilliam, had now been recklessly pursued for four years, was at length producing its natural results; it had brought the whole machinery of society and government into difficulties for which the only visible solution was martial law. All the ordinary and extraordinary powers of coercive legislation had been tried and found wanting: parliament had done its best, or its worst, and could do no more. A Convention Act had not prevented the organisation of a host of secret affiliated societies, with republicanism and separation for their end, and French alliance for their means; nor had a Gunpowder Act hindered the Ulster Union from enrolling and drilling its hundred thousand citizen-soldiers. The transportation, without judge or jury, of thousands of the peasantry, had not secured the loyalty of the millions that remained; the Insurrection Act had failed of quelling the insurrectionary spirit; the Habeas Corpus Suspension had crowded the gaols, the barracks, and the tenders with seditious and treasonable individuals, yet sedition and treason were more plentiful in the land than ever. The system of coercive and penal legislation had been worked out to its full length, and had failed. Coercive law would not do—law in any shape would not do: there was nothing left for it but to draw the sword. On the 3rd of March, Mr. Secretary Pelham wrote to General Lake, the commander of the forces in Ulster, directing him to disarm the province, to suppress all outrage, to disperse all assemblies having a tendency to outrage, *without waiting for the civil authority*—and generally, to act as a sort of Committee of Public Safety. In consequence of these instructions, General Lake issued, on the 13th of that month, a proclamation, which was in fact a sentence of outlawry and attainder on the whole north of Ireland:—

“ *Belfast, March 13, 1797.*

“ WHEREAS the daring and horrid outrages in many parts of this province, evidently perpetrated with a view to supersede the laws and the administration of justice by an organised system of murder and robbery, have increased to such an alarming degree, as from their atrocity and extent to bid defiance to the civil power, and to endanger the lives and properties of his Majesty's faithful subjects; and whereas, the better to effect their traitorous purposes, several persons who have been enrolled under the authority of his Majesty's commission, and others, have been forcibly and traitorously deprived of their arms; it is therefore become indispensably necessary for the safety and protection of the well-disposed, *to interpose the king's troops under my command*: and I do hereby give notice that I have received authority and directions *to act in such manner as the public*

Cleland, a magistrate of the said county.” This Rev. John Cleland had been private tutor to Lord Castlereagh. The disclosures made to government through this channel range over a period of nearly fourteen months, from April, 1797, to May, 1798.

* See Teeling's “ *Personal Narrative*,” pp. 23-25.

safety may require. I do therefore hereby enjoin and require all persons in this district (peace officers and those serving in a military capacity excepted), forthwith to bring in and surrender up all arms and ammunition which they may have in their possession to the officer commanding the king's troops in their neighbourhood.

"I trust that an immediate compliance with this order may render any act of mine to enforce it unnecessary.

"Let the people seriously reflect, before it is too late, on the ruin into which they are rushing; let them reflect upon their present prosperity, and the miseries in which they will inevitably be involved by persisting in acts of positive rebellion; let them instantly, by surrendering up their arms, and by restoring those traitorously taken from the king's forces, rescue themselves from the severity of military authority. Let all the loyal and well-intentioned act together with energy and spirit in enforcing subordination to the laws, and restoring tranquillity in their respective neighbourhoods, and they may be assured of protection and support from me.

"And I do hereby invite all persons who are enabled to give information touching arms or ammunition which may be concealed, immediately to communicate the same to the several officers commanding his Majesty's forces in their respective districts; and, for their encouragement and reward, I do hereby promise and engage that strict and inviolate secrecy shall be observed with respect to all persons who shall make such communication, and that every person who shall make it shall receive as a reward the full value of all such arms and ammunition as shall be seized in consequence thereof.

"G. LAKE, Lieutenant-General

"Commanding the Northern District."

Thus was the entire north of Ireland handed over to a military despotism. Yet "military despotism" is scarcely the true word. Military despotism is stern, hard, severe, but it is not necessarily cruel—is not cruel for the sake of cruelty. Its severity is cold and passionless; its crimes are means to an end; its violences are the product of calculation, the incidents of a system of policy. The state of things which this proclamation created and announced was not martial law simple, but martial law with religious and political partisanship; martial law in the hands of a banditti of Orangemen; martial law seeking the aid of spies and informers; martial law doing the work of an inquisition, and with the usual inquisitorial appliances of espionage and torture; martial law without military discipline or military honour. In that inquest for concealed arms and ammunition, every kind and degree of atrocity was practised, without restraint and without punishment. All the sanctities and decencies of life were outraged; every man's house, property, person, and family lay at the mercy of an armed mob of soldiery and yeomanry that knew no mercy; arson, robbery, murder, rape had a chartered impunity; no man was safe, in his house or out of his house, by day or by night, who was rich, or had an enemy, or was suspected, or was suspected of being suspected. It was now that a legion of spies and informers—afterwards better known as a "Battalion of Testimony"—began to be organised and drilled for the basest uses of a wicked government. It was now that treachery and perjury began to take rank among the constituted authorities; and the vilest of the vile—fed, lodged and clothed at the people's cost—were taken into the closet confidences of secretaries of state, and commissioned to direct the movements of general officers. And it was now that that execrable system began, of putting suspected persons to the torture to obtain confession, which, though shamelessly denied in England, was shamelessly practised in Ireland, and will remain down against us, the blackest spot in all British history, so long as the chronicles of that horrible time shall endure. But we need not speak further of these things now. The system of civil espionage and

military torture was as yet but in its infancy: we shall find both the hateful things again, some months later, matured into their full-grown proportions.

The first results of the proclamation of the 13th of March were far from corresponding with the intentions and expectations of the government. The people were exasperated rather than subdued. The disarming went on but slowly; and the numbers, zeal, and determination of the United Irishmen continued to increase. It was plain that something more must be done. The government had not yet got at the root of the matter: it must obtain more precise and definite information of the aims, methods, extent, and resources of the vast secret confederacy which it sought to crush, and carry on the war on a larger scale of military operations. The information needed was, after a while, obtained. On the 14th of April, intelligence was received at head-quarters that certain societies or committees of United Irishmen were to meet that day at the house of one John Alexander, in Belfast. Colonel Barber and a detachment of troops went to the house, apprehended fifteen individuals forming two committees, and seized their papers. These papers were, on the 29th, laid before the House of Commons by order of the Lord Lieutenant, and referred to a Secret Committee, who, on the 10th of May, gave in their Report, with the papers annexed as evidence. The Report, after detailing the proceedings of the earlier societies of United Irishmen, and disclosing so much as its authors then knew of the constitution and objects of the more recent organisation, sums up as follows:—

“It appears, from a variety of evidence, that no means are neglected for establishing their constitution and enforcing obedience to their laws; that contributions are levied to defray the expenses of the society; that threats and intimidations are employed against witnesses and jurymen, as a means to prevent their associates from being brought to justice, and that a committee is appointed to defray the expences of defending such as are brought to trial or are in prison; that the assistance of the French is expected, and held forth as negotiated for; that at Belfast alone exist eighty societies at least, and that emissaries are employed to extend these societies; that arms and ammunition are procured, pikes bought, officers appointed, military discipline recommended and enforced by oaths to be taken by officers and men; provision for the families of their society, during their exertions in the field; that suspected persons are brought to account for their actions; and it has been stated in evidence that a tribunal is appointed for this purpose, who try the offenders in their absence, and determine their punishment even to the death.”*

* We subjoin a few extracts from the documents appended to this Report, and partly confirmatory of its statements. They show, better than any mere general description, the sort of elements of which the practical working force of the Union consisted, and their ordinary ways of going on. We quote *verbatim et literatim*:—

“Provincial Reports.—Reported in the County C. that the Privy Council of Ireland summoned the titular bishops, and bribed them with 500 guineas, and desired them to summon the priests, and the priests for to do all in their power to find out if any of their hearers was U. I.—n, or held any conversation with the like, and if there was any that was, or did so, to excommunicate them from the church. Your County C. thinks that if there is any U. I.—n on the jury that will commit any of the prisoners that is confined for being U. I.—n, ought to lose their existence.”

“Belfast, Baronial Reports.—The reports sooner nor usual on account of our friends being expected soon into Bantry. Government is using all means in their power to put us into insurrection; the executive is taking proper measures to appoint proper officers.

* * * No person to insult yeomen on account of some of them turning out. *Set your face against bank notes and excise business, as that is the best means to harass the government.*

* * * You are to let the officers know their men, and the men their officers, and do not fail to engage them in a solemn manner, that they may call them out on one minute's warning, and that they may by that means endeavour to see them armed in the

That is, assuming the authenticity of this most apocryphal revelation, the rebels had their Secret Committee and their Habeas Corpus Suspension Act, as well as the government. Unhappily for Ireland, the iniquity of "trying offenders in their absence, and determining their punishment even to the death," had been in use in high places long before societies of United Irishmen were heard of. The existence of any such tribunal as that here spoken of needs, however, to be substantiated by better evidence than the allegation of a secret committee. The amount of credibility attaching to certain things "stated in evidence" on this occasion will be better understood presently, when we come to speak of a man to whom this committee was under very considerable obligations—the Informer Newell.

This report was the signal for new and stronger measures of coercion. Mr. Secretary Pelham, on presenting it to the House, said that "it must convince every man that *it was not legislation which should be resorted to* to suppress this daring and dark conspiracy, *but those strong measures which the executive government had already adopted*, with the approbation of the House." It appeared, from the papers of the United Irishmen, that but a small proportion of the arms in their possession had as yet been seized or surrendered; and it was deemed necessary to prosecute the inquisition with more vigour. The government were much annoyed, too, at that time, by a series of public meetings (of the legal and constitu-

most speedy manner. There is no time to be lost, *for the grand committee think that if one of the prisoners we let them be hanged, we should forfeit our intention for evermore.* For we know not the minute we'll be called on to give an account; for our friends is hourly expected."

"U. Irishmen are warned not to cut timber that does not belong to themselves on any acct; for if they be prosecuted for the same they will not meet with any support whatever, as it brings a reproach on the cause. They are also warned ag^t partial insurrections of every kind, but to be obedient to the present laws by a prudent and sober conduct, for by persevering in union we will at length work our own freedom in spite of all opposition. As soon as the South is properly org^d, a national convention will be established, which is expected soon to take place."

"County Report, April 11th, 1797. — Antrim, 22,716 men; 2,248 guns; 1,748 bayonets; 417 pistols; 363 swords; 4,888 pikes. * * * Recommended to the Provencal Ct to form a plan of provision for poor men's families during our exhorshings in the field. Fulton and M'Cormick afirs is settled. John brother-in-law to Henry Sinclair from Crew, Kinly Sherlick Dimanry is a bad man, and is wery dangeries to the cause. John Love bellymoner a bad man, very dangers to the cause. A risulution we again declare it, that it is highly improper to hold any communication with persons out of society, not nowing them to be regular members.—Resolved that it is recommended to the different societys that is able to enter into a voluntary subscription for the use of arming those that is not able."

It is but justice to add, with reference to one of the above quotations, that there is no evidence whatever of assassination having ever formed a part of the United Irish system. That murders were committed, on the one side as on the other, by individuals and by knots of individuals, under the impulse or the pretext of political fanaticism—is undoubtedly true: but of anything like a regular, systematic policy of assassination, practised by the members of the Union with the sanction of its heads, history knows nothing. One infamous journal, the *Union Star* (established in Dublin in the summer of 1797), openly advocated and advised the assassination of individuals, by name and personal description; but the atrocity was utterly repudiated by the leaders of the Union, and strongly denounced by the *Press*, at that time their only recognised literary organ. It throws some light on the merits of this question, that the *Union Star* was the only paper professing United Irish politics which escaped government prosecution and suppression by military violence. Its editor made favourable terms with the government, and was subsequently pensioned.

tional sort) in several of the counties, at which addresses were voted for the removal of Mr. Pitt, and the adoption of a conciliatory policy. This was a nuisance that called for prompt abatement ; added to which, Ministers had been more than ever frightened by the disclosures—many of them utterly fictitious—of a man of the name of Newell,* a renegade Defender

* This man's career is deserving of particular notice ; it is a pretty complete epitome, and a most instructive one, of the state of Ireland in 1797.

"EDWARD JOHN NEWELL," says Dr. Madden ("United Irishmen," Second Series, vol. i., Appendix) "was a native of Downpatrick, a portrait painter by profession. Treachery seemed to be the ruling passion of this man's life. To every friend or party he connected himself with he was false. He betrayed the secrets of the United Irish Society, professedly to prevent the murder of an exciseman named Murdock. He ingratiated himself into the confidence of Murdock, and then robbed him of the affections of his wife. He became one of the regular corps of ruffians, called the 'Battalion of Testimony,' who had apartments provided for them at the Castle, within the precincts of that place, which was the residence of the Viceroy, and the centre of the official business of the government. Having sold his former associates to the government, and by his own account having been the cause of two hundred and twenty-seven arrests, and the occasion of the flight of upwards of three hundred persons from their habitations, and many of them from their country, in consequence of the informations he had laid against them, he next betrayed the government, published their secrets, and fled from the service of Mr. Cooke to that of the Northern United Irishmen. * * * * The self-importance of this miscreant knew no bounds. He was on terms of familiar intercourse with the Chief Secretary and Crown Solicitor ; he corresponded with general officers, and had power to command their co-operation when and how he thought fit to make his requisition for it. He swaggered about the Castle-yard with all the consequence of a distinguished government official. He disregarded the ordinary rules and regulations of the Major's department in the Castle. At length he carried his audacity to the point of taking a pistol from his pocket, and deliberately firing at a sentinel on duty at the lower Castle-gate, who impeded his entrance at an hour when it was forbidden to allow persons to pass. He was in the act of discharging a second pistol at the sentinel, when he was overpowered and conveyed to the guard-house. In the morning Mr. Newell was released, when it was discovered who he was. He was then sent for to the Castle, and instead of being forthwith committed to Newgate for this capital offence, he was *reprimanded by Mr. Secretary Cooke.*"

In the narrative, entitled, "The Apostacy of Newell, containing the Life and Confessions of that celebrated Informer" (written by himself), Newell gives the following account of his first interview with Mr. Cooke, at Dublin Castle :—

"To open the soul, to give the tongue an unrestrained command, the wine was freely circulated. The Secretary set his pens and papers ready for the work ; but I, not choosing to trust much to such people, who, when they have got you in their power, think it the greatest and most fashionable way to forget their promises and plighted honour when the service is over, refused to tell anything until I had received a pardon for the crimes I had committed.

"Mr. Cooke.—Will you trust to my honour ?

"Newell.—Not in this case.

"C.—I assure you, you may rely on me.

"N.—I don't doubt it ; but, you'll pardon me, where the life is affected I rely on no man.

"C.—Making out a pardon will take up some days ; the people of the north will hear you are here, and they will counteract our schemes, and perhaps get off.

"N.—That, sir, is not my fault ; this is my determination. There is no harm done ; I can return again.

"C.—Would not a written pardon from the Lord-Lieutenant satisfy you, till we can get one made out ? I assure you it is of equal power. You know, *my dear Mr. Newell*, the state of the country. You know there is no time to be lost, and that government, for their own sake, would not desert you ; if they did, could they expect others to come forward like you ?

"N.—Sir, confident of the propriety of what you say, a written pardon shall satisfy

and United Irishman; who, on the 13th of April, had got himself introduced to Mr. Secretary Cooke at Dublin Castle, received the Lord Lieutenant's pardon for all past offences against his Majesty's peace and crown, entered on regular duty as a spy and informer, and commenced his task with swearing that a general insurrection and French invasion might be speedily expected. The consequence was that a further proclamation—designated by the Secret Committee of the following year “a measure, under the circumstances of the case, *strictly defensive*”—was issued on the 17th of May. The “strictly defensive” proclamation, after stating that the exertions of the civil power had proved ineffectual for the suppression of the traitorous and wicked conspiracy, &c., and that it had become necessary to employ the military force for the immediate suppression, &c., gave the “most direct and effectual orders to all officers commanding his

me for the present. Mr. Cooke then wrote to the Lord Lieutenant, and in a few minutes presented me with a paper, of which this is a copy:—

‘Dublin Castle, April 13th, 1797.

‘Sir,—I desire you will inform Edward John Newell that I hereby pardon him whatever offences he may have committed against his allegiance, and against his Majesty's peace and crown.

‘I am, sir, your obedient humble servant,

‘E. Cooke, Esq.

‘CAMDEN.’

“This night he did not form examinations, but asked me several questions. I informed him of the most of what I could; mentioned the men I thought dangerous, &c., of all which he made notes. I was then permitted to depart. I waited on him early in the morning. During nine hours I sat with Cooke he drew out my examinations, *the theory of which was mostly true, but which his inventive genius highly embellished.*

“Mr. Cooke, I call upon you, is this not true? *Did you not make me enter in my list men with whose very names I was unacquainted?* Oh! guardian worthy of our constitution! Did you not make me arrest the friend of the poor, the comforter of the afflicted, and a man of respectability, Dr. Crawford, of Lisburn, only because in our discourse I mentioned having once dined in his company?

“*Was I not obliged, to please you, to form a murder, to which I was to appear accessory,* because you would not be content without it? *You knew, you said, I belonged to an assassination committee.* You were sure, from my character, that I was privy to murder.

“I told you of one, for which you well knew examinations were lodged six months before, by one really present. Could then a man be murdered twice?

“Did you not, Mr. Cooke, see the falsehood, the improbability of people trusting such a business to a fortnight's knowledge? Did you not paint to me the improbability of the accusation? *Did you not bid me swear, absolutely swear, the time was longer!*—told me so short a time *would prejudice a jury against it.*” &c.

The result of this and other interviews was that Newell was sent, two days afterwards, to Belfast, with a letter of introduction to General Lake, in which the Secretary actually says—“You will please to allow him any money or number of men he may demand; *they are to obey his orders, and you are to take his advice in all affairs relative to this business.*” At Belfast Newell spent a week or ten days, giving his orders to generals and colonels, commanding the Commander-in-Chief—actually threatening him, when refractory, with government displeasure—demolishing what he pleased, arresting whom he pleased (“*the sport of man-hunting*” the fellow calls it), and drawing the public money as often and as largely as the needs of his profligacy required. He returned to Dublin in time to give evidence before the Secret Committee; took up his abode in the Castle, where apartments were assigned him, and “dined and supped at the Castle Tavern at the rate of three guineas a day, *which Mr. Cooke cheerfully accounted for.*”

His account of his evidence before the Secret Committee is ludicrous enough—yet there is a grave moral with it, too:—

“On the 3rd of May I attended in the Speaker's Chamber, at the Parliament House; and, at two o'clock, was admitted to the room where the Secret Committee of the Com-

Majesty's troops, by the exertion of their utmost force, to suppress the same." All officers, civil and military, were strictly enjoined to use their utmost endeavours to discover all pikes, pike-heads, concealed guns and swords, offensive weapons, or ammunition of any kind whatever—and to suppress all traitorous, tumultuous and unlawful assemblies, "without waiting for the directions of the civil magistrate." The proclamation likewise promised pardon to all persons who had been "seduced or intimidated" into joining the United Irish Societies, if they should surrender themselves and take the oath of allegiance on or before the 24th of June then next; "SAVE AND EXCEPT all such as have been guilty of murder, conspiracy of murder, burglary, burning of houses, corn or hay, stacks of straw or turf, maliciously digging up or injuring or destroying any potatoes, flax or hemp, rape or corn of any kind, planted or sowed, or destroying

mons were then sitting. After the usual formalities, I was with great ceremony placed in a high chair, for the benefit of being better heard.

"I went through the subject of the examinations, *improving largely on the hints and instructions Cooke had given me; propagating circumstances which never had, nor, I suppose, ever will happen*; increased the number of United Irishmen, their quantity of arms and ammunition; *fabricated stories which helped to terrify them, and raised me high in their estimation*, as a man whose perfect knowledge of this business made his information of the highest importance. I told them of laws framed to govern the republic, when they had overthrown the present government, many of which they approved of highly, though they had no foundation but the effusions of my own brain. I embellished largely the dangers that royalty and its friends were liable to from the machinations of the United men, who, I informed them, were regularly disciplined, and constantly improving themselves in military tactics: assured them there were men of the first rank and abilities connected with this business; that the French were hourly expected—they were to land at Galway, not at Bantry, as they supposed; that the people looked with eagerness for their arrival; and that government should not trust the people in the south, who had formerly pretended to rise in their defence, their loyalty being only *finesse*, the readier to join the French on their landing; that I was confident, from the disposition of the people, they would, in a few weeks, even if they did not arrive, attempt an insurrection, in which they were sure of succeeding, on account of their numbers, the justice of their cause, and their hopes from the soldiery.

"They seemed dreadfully terrified at my information, and instantly became incapable of asking me any more questions relative to this business. Will it be believed that a boy, even one of the swinish multitude of the north, filled with consternation and terror the leaders of the army and the senate! * * * The Attorney-General, after a long discourse upon the nature and danger of what we had heard, addressed me: 'Mr. Newell, you must now consider that we are a select committee of the Parliament of Ireland; *that that Parliament is to be guided by these gentlemen, and that these gentlemen are to be guided in their proceedings by you*; weigh well, then, the situation in which you now sit, and its consequences, and tell me, would a reform of Parliament please the people, and put an end to disturbances?' Sir, from my knowledge, nothing but the overthrow of Government and establishing a republic would now satisfy the people!"

On Newell's secession from government service, early in the next year, he went to a place of concealment near Belfast, where he wrote his "Life and Confessions." "Here," he says, "I bid a long adieu to all my greatness, and put an end to a life of upwards of ten months, which was fraught with every scene of infamy, luxury, and debauchery; during which I must have cost the government a sum of no less than two thousand pounds, as a reward for having in that short time been the cause of confining two hundred and twenty-seven innocent men to languish in either the cell of a bastille, or the hold of a tender; and, as I have heard, has been the cause of many of their deaths; as also for having been the cause of upwards of three hundred having fled from their habitations, their families and industry, to hide in the mountains, or seek for safety in some distant land."

Any comment on the above were superfluous. Against a government that could work so, and with such tools, rebellion stands in need of no justification—*except success*.

meadows or hay, maiming or houghing of cattle, administering or causing to be administered any unlawful oath or engagement to any of his Majesty's forces of any description, or inciting or encouraging any person to commit any of the aforesaid offences respectively, *and save and except all persons now in custody.*"

Newell's information to Mr. Secretary Cooke turned out to be substantially correct; and the policy of terror and coercion, "without waiting for the civil authority," probably was, "under the circumstances of the case, strictly defensive." Shame on the government that had made such defences necessary to itself! Shortly after Newell's disclosures, the subject of a general rising was seriously discussed at the meetings of the Union. The organised and regimented hundred thousand were impatient to begin, and their more prudent or timid leaders had long found the utmost difficulty in restraining them. Ever since the beginning of the year they had been waiting, and waiting, for the French, till they could wait no longer. The National Directory had already (March) sent one agent, Lewines, to urge the French government to a speedy fulfilment of its promises, and were on the point of dispatching another, Dr. Macneven, with still more pressing supplications. Promises and assurances in abundance had been received, but as yet no performance since the Bantry Bay attempt; and hope deferred was producing its usual result of heart-sickness. The appearance of the proclamation of the 17th of May was a loud call—if not to action—at all events to a prompt decision whether to act or not. The menace of coercion and the promise of pardon would alike tend to thin their ranks and abate their zeal, unless something were done; French aid seemed as far off as ever; and the feeling gained ground in the councils of the Union that, if ever they meant to do anything, now was the time. Accordingly, in the month of June, a plan for a general rising was much discussed, both at Dublin and in the North. But there was no unanimity. The Dublin delegates rebuked the precipitancy of the Northerners: these were disgusted with the cowardice of their metropolitan brethren, and unable to agree among themselves. The whole affair ended in a hasty and abortive outbreak in the county of Down, which met with no support, and was suppressed with ease by the government. The disarming then went on fast. The Secret Committee of 1798 say—

"The effect of the measures then adopted was immediately felt. The arms of the disaffected, by *necessary acts of coercion*, were collected throughout the province in great numbers; the loyal were encouraged to declare themselves; such as had been misled came in in crowds to take the benefit of the proclamation of pardon, which was extended for another month. *Outrage ceased*; and public confidence was so far restored throughout Ulster in the course of the months of July and August, that the laws were administered with effect in the different counties during the autumn circuit, and the manufacturing industry of the country was restored to its usual vigour during the remainder of the year."

And, on the 3rd of July, the Lord Lieutenant prorogued Parliament, with expressions of satisfaction with the past and trust for the future:—

"I have already the satisfaction to acquaint you, that great numbers who had been unfortunately seduced have returned to a sense of duty, and been admitted to his Majesty's clemency; and I trust that by perseverance and energy every vestige of disaffection will be effaced."

The facts stated by these high government authorities are, on the whole,

truly stated: but the government theory of those facts was false. The "necessary acts of coercion" had suppressed, for a while, the external vestiges of disaffection. The people were losing heart and hope. Their confidence in themselves and in their leaders was diminished. They distrusted their foreign allies, and the men by whom the foreign alliance had been negotiated. The French had been coming, and coming, ever since January—but did not come. Dissensions had revived between the Presbyterians and the Catholics, the latter of whom soon afterwards gave signs (by loyal addresses and resolutions) of a desire to make a separate peace with the government. In Ulster, in particular, the strength of the Union was very much broken. The inferior societies generally discontinued their meetings; the subscription lists fell off; and many counties refused to send delegates to the provincial committee. The following (from the Appendix to the Report of 1798) exhibits the unsatisfactory state of the Union at this period:—

"Provincial Meeting, Randalstown, August 14th, 1797.

"Five persons present. * * * *They think they can bring forward the whole nation yet* to act in a very short space of time, even "in case the French should be frustrated in making a descent, which they "are perfectly assured is their intention at this very instant. * * * "They reported that there are a number of societies formed in North "America, whose object is to assist Ireland; the Executive acknowledges "receiving the sum of 211 dollars from the said societies in the course of "these eight days. Report that *no money is to be had from the people, "the county Antrim excepted.*"

"Provincial Committee, Dungannon, September 14th.

"Ten members present. A person just arrived from France. He "brought word that the French had everything ready for making a descent, and that the most part of the troops were on board; and that the "Directory had given orders to their Admiral to proceed as soon as the "wind would answer. * * * Every man was asked *if he thought "his constituents would yet act as formerly?* General answer, *they "would, if they saw an equal chance.*"

It was true, then, as the government authorities triumphantly alleged, that coercion had not been without its effect in repressing the manifestations of disaffection. During the latter part of 1797, a something existed in Ireland which might very possibly be mistaken for peace, law, and order. But the government theory of the matter was a fatal and desperate fallacy. When, where, and how, since the creation of this world, was the "disaffection" of an oppressed nation "effaced" by "perseverance and energy" in martial law and military torture?

"I have seen in Ireland," said Earl Moira, "the most absurd, as well as the most disgusting tyranny, that any nation ever groaned under. I have been myself a witness of it in many instances; I have seen it practised and unchecked. I have seen in that country a marked distinction made between the English and Irish. I have seen troops that have been sent full of this prejudice, that every inhabitant of that kingdom is a rebel to the British government. I have seen the most wanton insults practised upon men of all ranks and conditions. I have seen the most grievous oppressions exercised, in consequence of a presumption that the person who was the unfortunate object of such oppression was in hostility to the government; and yet that has been done in a part of

the country as quiet and as free from disturbance as the city of London. Who states these things should, I know, be *prepared with proofs. I am prepared with them.* * * * In former times it has been the custom for Englishmen to hold the infamous proceedings of the inquisition in detestation. One of the greatest horrors with which it was attended was that the person, ignorant of the crime laid to his charge or of his accuser, was torn from his family, immured in a prison, and in the most cruel uncertainty as to the period of his confinement or the fate which awaited him. To this injustice, abhorred by Protestants in the practice of the Inquisition, are the people of Ireland exposed. All confidence, all security, are taken away. In alluding to the Inquisition, I have omitted to mention one of its characteristic features. If the supposed culprit refuses to acknowledge the crime with which he is charged, he is put to the rack, to extort confession of whatever crime is alleged against him by the pressure of torture. The same proceedings have been introduced into Ireland. When a man is taken up on suspicion, he is put to the torture; nay, if he be merely accused of concealing the guilt of another. The rack, indeed, is not at hand; *but the punishment of picketing is in practice, which has been for some years abolished, as too inhuman even for the dragoon service.* I have known a man, in order to extort confession of a supposed crime, or of that of some of his neighbours, *picketed until he actually fainted; picketed a second time, until he fainted again; as soon as he came to himself, picketed a third time, until he once more fainted*—and all upon mere suspicion! Nor is this the only species of torture; *many have been taken and hung up until they were half dead, and then threatened with a repetition of the cruel treatment, unless they made confession of the imputed guilt.* These are not particular acts of cruelty, exercised by men abusing the power committed to them, but they form a part of our system; they are notorious. This, however, is not all. Your lordships, no doubt, will recollect the famous proclamation issued by a military commander in Ireland, requiring the people to give up their arms. It never was denied that this proclamation was illegal, though defended on some supposed necessity. In the execution of this order the greatest cruelties have been committed. If any one was suspected to have concealed weapons of defence, his house, his furniture, and all his property were burned. But this is not all. If it was supposed that any district had not surrendered all the arms which it contained, a party was sent out to collect the number *at which it was rated*; and in the execution of this order, thirty houses have sometimes been burned down in a single night. Officers took on themselves to decide discretionally the quantity of arms; and upon their opinions these fatal consequences followed. Many such cases might be enumerated; but, from prudential motives, I wish to draw a veil over more aggravated facts which I could have stated, *and which I am willing to attest before the Privy Council or at your Lordships' bar.* These facts are well known in Ireland, but they cannot be made public through the channel of the newspapers, for fear of that summary mode of punishment which has been practised towards the *Northern Star*.” *

And yet they “trusted that, by perseverance and energy” in such courses, “every vestige of disaffection would be effaced!” The thing could only have been done by carrying the perseverance and energy the length of physically effacing every vestige of the people. It is true, that towards the close of 1797 Ireland was, temporarily and in appearance, quieted by the coercive measures of the government, and that military violence and terrorism were considerably abated. But the matter could not, in the nature of things, end where it was. Without a radical and sweeping change of men and measures, coercion, once begun, must go on. Relaxation, suspension, abatement of hostilities, could only be interpreted, after what had been, as a sign of weakness—an invitation to more rebellion, to

* Speech in the British House of Lords, November, 22, 1797. The ministerial reply (delivered by the mouth of Lord Grenville) to this proffer of evidence and prayer for inquiry was—“If such excesses were perpetrated, *were there no courts of justice, no laws, no magistrates, no tribunals open to the complaints of the oppressed? Ireland had its juries as well as this country*; and the same safeguards were provided for the lives of the Irish as for Englishmen: indeed, *if a system so rigorous as was described had been pursued, it must naturally be resented by a spirited and independent people.*”

The cool mockery of this did more to exasperate Ireland than all the ferocious extravagances of the Beresfords and Fitzgibbons.

be put down by more coercion. The United Irishmen, though cast down, were not destroyed. They learned from experience. They determined to hazard no further effort for the present without foreign aid; to risk no premature and partial outbreak; to risk nothing, so long as they were gaining strength; to extend their organisation, multiply their resources, husband their strength, add to their stock of arms, and wait for events. The temper so unexpectedly evinced by the Munster peasantry on the arrival of the French in the previous winter showed them that they had over-calculated the effect of ages of "misery, oppression, and famine" on the loyalty of the millions, and they determined that, when the French came again, there should be no mistake. Accordingly, during the remainder of this year the chiefs of the Union directed all their energies to the proselytising of the South and West. Emissaries from Ulster and the metropolis went through the provinces of Munster and Connaught, fraternised with the Defenders, dropped "republicanism and the rights of man"—topics little understood in those quarters—and were eloquent on the title of potatoes. Their labours were eminently successful. New societies were everywhere formed; the prædial Defender agitation was absorbed into the political United Irish agitation, "insomuch that, in the course of the autumn and winter of 1797, the peasantry in the midland and southern counties were *sworn and ripe for insurrection*."* The views of these new United Irishmen were not, it may be supposed, by any means "enlightened." The ideas of the Emmets, Neilsons, and Macnevens were not their ideas. The United Irish system was, to them, little else than the old system of Defenderism, or Whiteboyism, under a new name, made efficient and respectable by an unlooked-for accession of allies from the middle and higher classes of society. But, however defective their theory of republican government, they were perfectly well versed in the practice of rebellion; and this union of the intellectual with the physical force of the country—this alliance of the speculative republicanism of the Presbyterian north with the practical wrongs and wretchedness of the Catholic south, boded, for the coming year, a convulsion desperate and deadly.

Meanwhile, fresh provocatives to rebellion were administered by the incendiaries of Dublin Castle—the "ringleaders of sedition placed in authority," as Grattan called them. If the work of wholesale coercion by the sword went on slackly, it was that the government might have breathing time to work the machinery of law against a few selected victims. "*Had not Ireland juries?*" asked Lord Grenville. A case occurred towards the close of this year 1797, which excited the deepest sympathy with the individual sufferer, and universal execration (wherever men had courage to execrate) against the government. In the month of October, WILLIAM ORR was executed in the north, on the charge of administering the United Irish oath to one Hugh Wheatly, a soldier of the Scotch Fencibles. It was as distinct a case of murder as the records of judicial or official crime have to show. Three of the jury that had found him guilty (with a recommendation to mercy) made affidavit in open court that whisky had been brought into the jury-room; that some of their fellow-jurors had threatened them with the vengeance of government if they acquitted the prisoner; that others had assured them that a verdict, not an execution, was the object of the government, and that the prisoner's life was

* Report of Secret Committee of 1798.

safe; and that, under the influence of intimidation, liquor, and the physical exhaustion of thirteen hours' deliberation, their verdict of Guilty had been given. Abundant proof was adduced, likewise, that the informer Wheatly was a man of infamous life and reputation; and subsequently he declared on oath his compunction for this and other perjuries. The recommendation to mercy, and the confessions of the jurors, were laid before the Lord Lieutenant: not without result; for the prisoner was *respited*—respited three successive times, and executed at last. Mercy was offered him on the sole condition of his declaring himself guilty: but truth was dearer to Orr than life. He died protesting his innocence.

"The story of his last moments, as I have heard it told by those who witnessed them, was thus:—

"Upon the scaffold, nearest to him, and by his side, stood a Roman Catholic domestic, faithful and attached to him. Manacled and pinioned, he directed him to take from his pocket the watch which he had worn till now; that time had ceased for him, and his hours and minutes were no longer to be measures of his existence. 'You, my friend, and I must now part. Our stations here on earth have been a little different, and our modes of worshipping that Almighty Being whom we both adore—before his presence we shall stand both equal. Farewell—remember Orr.'"

"*Remember Orr!—Remember Orr!*"—the words were written everywhere, spoken everywhere. The last farewell of individual regard to a faithful servant became a patriotic watchword, a battle-cry of vengeance to an exasperated people: and in the stir and strife of the months that followed, with the maddening memory of the wrongs of centuries was mingled the fresh recollection of this crowning infamy, prompting all honest men to REMEMBER ORR.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE YEAR 1798—PREPARING FOR THE WAR—MORE DISAPPOINTMENTS FROM FRANCE—TRIAL OF FINNEY—O'BRIEN AND THE BATTALION OF TESTIMONY—MILITARY COMMITTEE—AN ARMY FORMIDABLE TO EVERY ONE BUT THE ENEMY—THOMAS REYNOLDS—ARRESTS OF THE TWELFTH OF MARCH—THE NEW DIRECTORY—PROCLAMATION OF THE THIRTIETH OF MARCH—"WELL-TIMED MEASURES TO MAKE THE REBELLION EXPLODE"—PLAN OF THE CAMPAIGN—THE DAY FIXED.

WITH the year 1797 the patriots lost all reasonable prospect of timely and efficient aid from France. The summer and autumn of that year brought a second disappointment to the hopes of Ireland, yet more tantalising than that of Bantry Bay, and a second deliverance to Great Britain, even more remote from the range of ordinary probabilities. Early in July all was ready at the Texel for a second expedition to Ireland, on a scale of efficiency and formidableness about equal to Hoche's in the previous winter. The statesmen and generals of the young Batavian Republic, eager to emulate the glories of their fathers and re-assert their rank as a great

* Speech of William Sampson, at Philadelphia, in 1831 (given by Dr. Madden).

European power, had staked in the cause of liberty "their last ship and their last shilling." Fifteen sail of the line, ten frigates, and twenty-seven transports, with fourteen thousand soldiers and the best of their generals and admirals, were the force destined to emancipate Ireland and dismember the empire of Britain. Again the good genius of England—or the evil genius of Ireland—prevailed. If that Texel armament could only have been got ready a month or two sooner!—the British fleet was then up in mutiny, the wind fair, the coast clear, and the rebel army in Ireland ready waiting. It was now too late. The mutineer admiral, Parker, had been hanged at Sheerness on the last day of June, the mutiny was at an end, the wind had changed, and the mouth of the Texel was blockaded by Admiral Duncan and a south-wester. For five weeks together this double blockade lasted (the disarming of Ulster going on the while); and at length, by the middle of August, provisions ran short, the troops had to be disembarked, and the expedition was relinquished. The end of this Texel business was on the 11th of October, when Admiral Duncan annihilated the navy of Holland at Camperdown. Thus, by a combination and recurrence of casualties which no statesmanship could have anticipated or averted, was the British empire again saved from dismemberment, for the second time within eight months. About the same period, the death of Hoche and the political proscription of Carnot—the only two men in France who thoroughly understood the interest France had in Ireland—precluded for the present all possibility of a third attempt. The French Directory kept on promising, and the Irish Directory kept on hoping, the best they could; a magnificent *Armée d'Angleterre* was got up on paper; but nothing was done—Ireland was left to fight her battle alone.

It would have been better for Ireland if her patriots had prepared themselves for this from the beginning. Dependence on French aid was their ruin.* The question, whether to wait for the French or to act without them, divided and perplexed their counsels, and was fruitful of jealousies and dissensions; the "rashness" of the one party, and the "timidity" of the other, were tempting topics of mutual recrimination whenever anything went wrong. The hope of foreign assistance prevented them from acting at a time (the spring of 1797) when action might, not very improbably, have been attended with success; the delay wearied and disheartened them; the final disappointment hurried them into desperate and unprepared exertion. The following extracts from their papers show how mischievously this French alliance operated; alternately elating them with illusory hopes, and depressing them with vexing and wasting disappointments:—

"Provincial Meeting, October 14th, 1797, Armagh.

"Reported, that there had not been any information from our delegates in France, further than that one of them had drawn a bill for £160 on a member of the Executive. *The opinion of the Executive was, that the French should have been here by this time*; but they thought that the British government had got into possession of the plan of the Executive, which has frustrated them for some time; *but they were sure the French never would make peace until they had fulfilled their engagements with Ireland.*"

* This was the opinion of one of the best and wisest men among them—Thomas Addis Emmet.—See Madden, Second Series, vol. ii., p. 38.

“ Provincial Meeting, November 14th, Armagh.

“ The secretary said, we all knew the expedition which was at the
“ Texel, destined for this country, had been put off, owing to the defeat of
“ the Batavian fleet; *but the Directory were now preparing a more*
“ *formidable expedition for us, which we might depend upon.*”

“ Provincial Meeting, December 14th, Randalstown.

“ Reports delivered, that the Executive Committee had not got any
“ information from France since the last meeting, but that they every day
“ expected the arrival of a delegate. *They were sure the expedition was*
“ *still preparing for Ireland.*”

“ Provincial Meeting, January 14th, 1798, Armagh.

“ The reporter said there had been a meeting of the National Committee,
“ and it was found, notwithstanding all the depredations committed by the
“ military, that the upper provinces were in a tolerable state of organisa-
“ tion. He said that one of our delegates had arrived from France. He
“ told the meeting that it had been an intention of the French to invade
“ Ireland only, and that they were to have put that into execution in this
“ month, but that the Directory had come to a second resolution *that they*
“ *would now fit out a more formidable expedition, and that they would*
“ *invade the whole three kingdoms at once.* Therefore, from the mag-
“ nitude of such a great business, we need not expect them as soon as we
“ did. *He thought they could not come until it would be far on in the*
“ *spring.*”

“ Provincial Meeting, February 1st, Shane's Castle.

“ The person who reported said, *he would, by heavens, speak his*
“ *mind openly, for he was not afraid, as our delivery was now*
“ *certain.* He said the National Committee had met in Dublin that week,
“ and that the upper provinces were all ready to act in a moment; two
“ regiments in one province had offered to deliver it. He said we had
“ three delegates arrived from France, and that *the French were going on*
“ *with the expedition, and that it was in a greater state of forward-*
“ *ness than was expected;* but, what was more flattering, three delegates
“ had been sent from the United Britons to our National Committee, and
“ that from this very moment we were to consider England, Scotland, and
“ Ireland all as one people, acting for one common cause. *There were*
“ *legislators now chosen from the three kingdoms to act as an executive*
“ *for the whole.* He then produced an address which the delegates of
“ Britain brought with them to our National Committee, and that was the
“ reason, he said, which made him so violent, as he was certain we could
“ now obtain liberty, although the French never should come here. He
“ told the delegates to cause the men to hold themselves in readiness, as
“ the hour of action could not be far distant.”

“ Provincial Meeting, February 27th, Armagh.

“ The reporter said, we had a delegate arrived from France, and that
“ the French *were using every endeavour to have the expedition for*
“ *this country completed,* and that our delegate came home to cause us to
“ put ourselves into a state of organisation to join them, *as the Directory*

“ *positively assured our delegates that the expedition would set out for this country in the latter end of April or beginning of May.*” *

Well might Theobald Wolfe Tone say, “ unhappy is the nation whose liberty depends on the will of another.” In this want of self-reliance, this fond and credulous leaning on other people’s promises, this vacillating to and fro with every breath of rumour from abroad, we see the failure of the whole scheme foredoomed and foreshown.

The first event which we have to note in the history of Ireland for the year 1798, is aptly illustrative of one of the influences that were then rising to the ascendancy in the government of that fated land. On the 16th of January, PATRICK FINNEY—one of sixteen arrested at the same time, on the same charge and the same evidence—was tried in Dublin for high treason. The chief witness for the crown was one JAMES O’BRIEN, a worthy member and representative of that “ *Battalion of Testimony* ” of which we have more than once made mention—a horde of wretches, infamous by life and reputation, retained in the service of Town-Major Sirr, regularly domiciled in Dublin Castle and its precincts to be ready on the shortest notice for every description of assize duty; housed, fed, and clothed at the public expense, and bountifully supplied with every luxury that the appetite of vulgar profligacy craves.† We have already had one specimen of this gang in the person of Edward John Newell: James

* Report of Secret Committee of 1798, Appendix, xiv.

† “ From the year 1796 to 1800, a set of miscreants, steeped in crime, sunk in debauchery, prone to violence, and reckless of character, constituted what was called ‘the Major’s People.’ A number of these wretches were domiciled within the gates of the Castle, where there were regular places of entertainment allotted for them, contiguous to the viceroy’s palace; for another company of them, a house was allotted opposite Kilmainham gaol, familiarly known to the people by the name of the ‘Stag House;’ and for one batch of them, who could not be trusted with liberty, there was one of the yards of that prison and the surrounding cells assigned to them; which is still called the ‘Stag Yard.’ These persons were considered under the immediate protection of Majors Sirr, Swan, and Sandys, and to interfere with them in the course of their duties as spies or witnesses was to incur the vengeance of their redoubtable patrons. * * * They were known to the people by the name of the ‘Battalion of Testimony.’ ”—Madden’s “United Irishmen,” vol. ii., p. 379.

The case of Hevey v. Sirr (*ibid.*, p. 380 *et seq.*) shows how serious a thing it was to incur the vengeance of the Major.

Curran’s often-quoted description of the Battalion is not more terrible than true:—

“ I speak of what your own eyes have seen, day after day, during the course of this commission, from the box where you are now sitting; the number of horrid miscreants who avowed upon their oaths that they had come from the very seat of government—from the Castle, where they had been worked upon by the fear of death and the hopes of compensation to give evidence against their fellows; that the mild and wholesome councils of this government are holden over those catacombs of living death, where the wretch that is buried a *man* lies till his heart has time to fester and dissolve, and is then dug up a *witness*. Is this fancy, or is it fact? Have you not seen him after his resurrection from that tomb, after having been dug out of the region of death and corruption, make his appearance upon the table, the living image of life and of death, and the supreme arbiter of both? Have you not marked, when he entered, how the stormy wave of the multitude retired at his approach? Have you not seen how the human heart bowed to the supremacy of his power in the undissembled homage of deferential horror? * * * *Informers are worshipped in the temple of justice, even as the devil has been worshipped by pagans and savages*: even so, in this wicked country, is the informer an object of judicial idolatry; even so is he soothed by the music of human groans; even so is he placated by the fumes and the blood of human sacrifices.”—Speech in defence of Peter Finnerty, December 22, 1797.

O'Brien was another. This man O'Brien had in former years picked up a living as a hanger-on to the excise, in the mixed capacity of informer and (when he was drunk) impostor—personating the exciseman, and extorting bribes from delinquents. He had likewise dabbled in that branch of alchemy which supplies *recipes* for “making copper money look like silver money.”* The political events of 1797 opened a wider and more lucrative field for his talents. In April that year, O'Brien, having got himself sworn a United Irishman, gave information to a magistrate of the name of Higgins, was introduced by Mr. Higgins to Lord Portarlington, and by Lord Portarlington to Mr. Cooke and other members of the government. He was immediately put on full duty; was enlisted into a dragoon regiment quartered in Dublin (with a view, it would seem, to watch the

* The following sample of an Irish crown witness of 1798 is too characteristic to be omitted. We quote from Howell's State Trials :—

“Q.—Did you ever give Purcell a recipe?

“A.—I did.

“Q.—Was it for money?

“A.—No.

“Q.—What was it?

“A.—It was partly an order, where Hyland, he and I hoped to be together. It was a pass-word I gave him to go to Hyland to buy light gold that I knew was going to the country.

“Q.—Did you ever give him any other recipe?

“A.—I do not know but I might; we had many dealings.

“Q.—Had you many dealings in recipes?

“A.—In recipes?

“Q.—I mean recipes to do a thing; as, to make a pudding, &c. Did you give him recipes of that nature?

“A.—I do not know, but I might give him recipes to do a great number of things.

“Q.—To do a great number of things! What are they?

“A.—Tell me the smallest hint, and I will tell the truth.

“Q.—Upon that engagement, I will tell you. Did you ever give him a recipe to turn silver into gold, or copper into silver?

“A.—Yes, for turning copper into silver.

“Q.—You have kept your word?

“A.—I said I would tell everything against myself.

“Q.—Do you consider that against yourself?

“A.—I tell you the truth. *I gave him a recipe for making copper money like silver money.*

“Q.—What did you give it him for? Did he make use of it? Was it to protect his copper from being changed that you did it?

“A.—He was very officious to make things in a light easy way, without much trouble, to make his bread light; but I did it more in fun than profit.

“Q.—You did not care how much coin he made by it?

“A.—I did not care how much coin he made by it; he might put it upon the market-cross.

“Q.—Do you say you do not care how many copper shillings he made?

“A.—I did not care whether he made use of it or not.

“Q.—Upon your solemn oath, you say that you did not care how many base shillings he made in consequence of the recipe you gave him?

“A.—I did not care how many he told of it, or what he did with it.

“Q.—Had you never seen it tried?

“A.—No, I never saw the recipe I gave him tried; but I saw others tried.

“Q.—For making copper look like silver?

“A.—To be sure.

“Q.—Do you recollect whether you gave him half-a-crown, upon which that recipe was tried?

“A.—I never saw it tried; but I gave him a bad half-crown. I did not give it him in payment: I did it more to humbug him than anything else.”

progress of sedition in the barracks), and at the same time received instructions to attend all United Irish meetings and report their proceedings to his employers. The instructions were faithfully obeyed. He says—"I never went to a meeting that I did not give an account of it to Colonel Henniker, Lord Portarlington, and Mr. Secretary Cooke in the Castle." The result of his labours was the arrest, in the following month, of Patrick Finney and fifteen others.

The defence of Finney, by Curran and M'Nally, was a masterpiece of ability and tact. Their only chance of saving the prisoners was to destroy the credit of the witness; which process, commenced on the man's cross-examination, was completed by means of the following ingenious expedient:—

"While Mr. Curran was cross-examining him, the prisoner's agent "accidentally heard from some of the bystanders that there was a man "residing at the distance of a few miles from Dublin, whose testimony "would place beyond a doubt that O'Brien was perjuring himself in the "answers that he returned. A chaise was immediately dispatched to bring "up this person; and in the interval it was proposed by Mr. Curran "that he, who, as senior, was to have commenced the prisoner's defence, "should reserve himself for the speech to evidence, and that his colleague "should state the case, and *continue speaking as long as he could find a "syllable to say*, so as to give time to the chaise to return before the trial "should be over. The latter, in whose character there was as little of "mental as of personal timidity, accepted the proposal without hesitation; "and, for once belying the maxim that 'brevity is the soul of wit,' "produced an oration so skilfully voluminous, that by the time it was "concluded, which was not until his physical strength was utterly exhausted, the evening was so far advanced that the court readily "consented to a temporary adjournment, for the purpose of refreshment; and before it resumed its sittings, the material witness for "the prisoner had arrived." *

The result of the exposure which ensued—a rare result in those times—was that Finney was acquitted, and the other fifteen prisoners were discharged. This first appearance of O'Brien in court was his last—in that character. As a witness, this "wretch who would dip the Evangelists in blood" was no longer producible, even to Irish juries of 1798; but he had qualities which made him still of value to the constituted authorities. He was retained on duty at the Castle in the capacity of ruffian and bully; and, as one of the Major's People, swaggered about the streets of Dublin in the "sport of man-hunting," and superintended the floggings in the Castle-yard. In this man's ultimate fate, even the sturdiest advocate for the abolition of death punishment must recognise a moral fitness. In May, 1800, O'Brien was tried for a foul and wanton murder (Curran and M'Nally being appointed to conduct the prosecution), convicted, and hanged. His existence terminated amid *loud cheers*.

From an early period of the year 1798 it became manifest to the United Irish leaders, that if anything was ever to be done it must be done soon.

* "Life of Curran," vol. i., p. 327.

M'Nally's speech, which quite corresponds with this account of its origin, will be found in Howell's State Trials.

The accession of the Defenders, and the Catholic peasantry generally, to the ranks of the Union had swelled up the numbers of the confederacy to an extent very far beyond what they had ever reached before; and the loss sustained by the disarming of Ulster, and the general decline of the cause in the north, seemed abundantly compensated by the progress made in the southern and midland counties. At the same time, the nature and first results of this increase of strength were not such as any wise man could regard with unmixed complacency. What the Union had gained in numbers it had more than lost in character. If the alliance with the Defenders had increased its physical force, the increase was at the expense of its morality and respectability: Defenders and Whiteboys were Defenders and Whiteboys still, call them what you would. The whole system was rapidly degenerating. Local rioting, predatory and vindictive outrage, robbery, and murder,* were wasting the force that would presently be needed for the work of national independence, bringing disgrace on the very name of United Irishmen, alarming the fears and cooling the zeal of the older and wiser supporters of the cause, whose aim was still, what it always had been, civil and religious liberty and good government. The Secret Committee of this year say, in their Report—

“ In the months of February and March, many parts of the provinces of Leinster and Munster were actually in the possession of a murderous banditti. If they did not appear in arms by day, it only rendered their rebellion more difficult to be met and crushed by the king's troops and yeomanry. Not a night passed without numerous murders. Several districts in the provinces of Leinster and Munster had been proclaimed, under the powers given to the Lord Lieutenant and Council by the act for preventing insurrections; but these measures proved ineffectual. Very many of the loyal inhabitants of the counties of Cork, Limerick, Tipperary, Kilkenny, Carlow, King's County, Queen's County, Kildare, and Wicklow were, in the course of one month, stripped of their arms, and in many places obliged to fly for shelter into the garrison towns: and, as one instance among many of the daring lengths to which the conspirators at this time had proceeded, your committee think it necessary to state that, in open day, eight hundred insurgents, principally mounted, invested the town of Cahir, in the county of Tipperary, held possession of it until they had made a regular search through every house, and carried off in triumph all the arms and ammunition they could find.”

It was plain that this could not be suffered to go on, without infinite peril to the ultimate success, and even to the existence of the Society of United Irishmen. These unruly energies must be regulated—these scattered forces must be combined and concentrated: the plan for a general insurrection must be matured and effectuated without loss of time—or else these aimless, profit-

* “ Towards the end of February the country became a scene of riot, robbery, and assassination, night and day; nor were the United Irishmen the only actors in these disgraceful scenes. * * * Every man fortified his house; all windows within five-and-twenty or thirty feet from the ground were boarded or bricked up, with mere loopholes left to fire or look through. Every gentleman went about completely armed. The few—the very few—who did not use these precautions, and who nevertheless passed in safety, became suspected, and suspicion was the signal for persecution.”—“ Life of Thomas Reynolds,” by his Son, vol. i., p. 216.

less, partial insurrections would ruin the thing altogether. The vigilance and activity of the government, too, had increased; and the Union was daily losing ground in the esteem and sympathy of all who counted government of any sort preferable to anarchy. Accordingly, it was determined by the leaders to make instant preparations for the final and crowning effort. With the view of being ready, either to co-operate with the French in the event of their arrival, or to act, in case of need, independently of foreign aid, a Military Committee was appointed (in February) by the Executive Directory, with instructions to bring the entire force of the Union into readiness for immediate action. The following document (given in the Report of the Secret Committee of 1798) shows the temper, purposes, and estimated force of the Union at this period :—

“ National Committee, February 28th, 1798.

“ Resolved—That our thanks be returned to the several colonels for “ their effectual exertions in embodying and arming their several regi-
“ ments.

“ Resolved—That two delegates be sent into Connaught by the Ulster
“ Provincial, to organise that province.

“ Resolved—*That we will pay no attention whatever to any attempt
“ that may be made by either House of Parliament to divert the public
“ mind from the grand object which we have in view,* as nothing short of
“ the complete emancipation of our country will satisfy us.

“ Resolved—That the Executive do take such steps immediately as will
“ tend most expeditiously to bring about a union of the four provinces,
“ three only having as yet come forward.

“ Resolved—That the counties of Carlow, Meath, Wicklow, Derry,
“ Down, and Antrim deserve well of their country for their manly offer of
“ emancipating her directly; but that they are requested to bear the
“ shackles of tyranny a little longer, until the whole kingdom shall be in
“ such a state of organisation as will, by their joint co-operation, effect
“ without loss that desirable point, which is hourly drawing to a crisis.”

This paper of February 26th likewise contains an estimate of the
“ armed men” belonging to the Union. It gives to Ulster 110,990 men,
to Munster 100,634; with returns from Kildare, Wicklow, Dublin county,
Dublin city, King’s County, Queen’s County, Carlow, Kilkenny, and
Meath—making a total of 279,698.

At the same time “detailed military instructions” were issued to the
Adjutant-Generals of the Union. They were ordered to make monthly
returns on the number, strength and arms of the regiments, and the qualifi-
cations of their officers, stating who had been in the army and had seen
actual service; on the number of mills in their counties, and the average
quantity of corn in them, summer and winter; on the breadth and condi-
tion of the roads, depth of the rivers, height of their banks, situation of
bridges and fords; the best positions to intercept convoys; what number of
towns and villages in each county, and how many horse and foot could be
quartered in them; who the best patriots were, and best fitted, by intelli-
gence and honesty, to be employed as commissaries; to communicate to
the Executive every change of quarters of the government forces, the si-
tuation, nature, and strength of government depôts of ammunition, arms,
and money; and to be ready to act immediately on the arrival of the

French, bringing with them all they could of cars, draught-horses, harness, and horses to mount cavalry, with three days' forage."*

* Dr. Madden gives, apparently on good authority, the following memorandum of a conversation between Lord Edward Fitzgerald and "one who possessed his entire confidence, who communicated with him on the subject of the contemplated rising immediately before its intended outbreak, and who fruitlessly endeavoured to dissuade him from it." It is a valuable illustrative supplement to the official documents above quoted :—

"The person in question met Lord Fitzgerald by appointment at the Shakespeare Gallery, Exchequer-street, about one month before the arrests in March, to confer with the delegates from the different counties respecting the projected rising. After Lord Edward had received the different reports of the number of men ready for the field in the different counties, he called on the gentleman above referred to for his opinion. Lord Edward said, 'he deeply regretted his friend should have withdrawn himself so long from any active interference in the business of the Union; if he unfortunately persisted in so doing, the friends of the Union might be led to imagine he had deserted them in the hour of need; that he, Lord Fitzgerald, had determined on an immediate and general rising of the people, their impatience for which was no longer to be restrained, nor, with advantage to the cause, to be resisted.' 'My lord,' was the reply, 'I am not a person to desert a cause in which I have embarked. I knew the danger of it when I joined it: were those dangers only for myself, or the friends about me, I am not the man to be deterred by the consideration of what may happen to myself or them. We might fall, but the cause might not fail; but when I know the step that you are taking will involve that cause in the greatest difficulties, my fears are great—I tremble for the result. My lord, all the services that you or your noble house have ever rendered to the country, or ever can render to it, will never make amends to the people for the misery and wretchedness the failure of your present plans will cause them.' 'I tell you,' replied Lord Edward impetuously, 'the chances of success are greatly in favour of our attempt. Examine these returns. Here are returns which show that one hundred thousand armed men may be counted on to take the field.' 'My lord,' replied his friend, '*it is one thing to have a hundred thousand men on paper, and another in the field.* A hundred thousand men on paper will not furnish fifty thousand men in array. I, for one, am enrolled amongst the number; but I candidly tell you, you will not find me in your ranks. You know for what objects we joined this Union, and what means we reckoned on for carrying them into effect. Fifteen thousand Frenchmen were considered essential to our undertaking. If they were so at that time, still more so are they now, when our warlike aspect has caused the government to pour troops into the country.' 'What!' said Lord Edward, 'would you attempt nothing without these fifteen thousand men—would you not be satisfied with ten thousand?' 'I would my lord,' replied his friend, if the aid of the fifteen could not be procured.

"But, continued Lord Edward, 'if even the ten could not be got, what would you do then?'

"I would then accept of five, my lord,' was the reply.

"But,' said Lord Edward, fixing his eyes with great earnestness on him, '*we cannot get five thousand*; and with respect to the larger force we originally wished for, had we succeeded, with so large a body of French troops, we might have found it difficult enough to get rid of our allies. I tell you, we cannot get even the five thousand you speak of, and when you know that we cannot, will you desert our cause?' The eyes of the delegates were turned on the person thus addressed. He felt that Lord Edward had put the matter in such a light before those present, that he would have been branded as a traitor if he abandoned the cause while there was a ray of hope for its success.

"My Lord,' said he, 'if five thousand men could not be obtained, I would seek the assistance of a sufficient number of French officers to head our people, and with three hundred of these, perhaps we might be justified in making an effort for independence, but not without them. What military men have we of our own, to lead our unfortunate people into action against a disciplined army?'

"Lord Edward ridiculed the idea of there being anything like discipline at that time in the English army. 'Besides, the numbers,' he said, 'of the United Irishmen would more than counterbalance any superiority in the discipline of their enemies.'

"My lord,' said his friend, 'we must not be deceived; they are disciplined, and our people are not. If the latter are repulsed and broken, who is to re-form their lines. Once thrown into disorder, the greater their numbers, the greater will be the havoc made amongst them.'

All men and parties in Ireland were now hurrying forward to the last, worst extremities. Peace, law, and order were no longer extant, even in pretence and make-believe. If United Irishmen were becoming demoralised into violence and outrage, they were not worse than their rulers, and the agents whom those rulers licensed and indulged. Under Lord Carhampton's *régime* the army and yeomanry had come to be a "banditti," to the full as "murderous" as any of the peasant and popish United Irishmen reported against by Secret Committees. That nobleman, on relinquishing the command (November, 1797), left the troops in such a state of "licentiousness," that his successor, the gallant and humane Abercromby, declared they were "*formidable to every one but the enemy.*"* And there was no redress to be had for the misdoings of military licentiousness: the legislature itself was in a state of licentiousness equally formidable. In February this year, one effort more was made by Earl Moira to check the system of torture, house-burning, and peasant-shooting. He repeated in the Irish House of Lords the statements which he had already made in the British legislature, with the same prayer for inquiry, and the same proffer of evidence. The result was the same in the one parliament as in the other, though with a characteristic difference in the mode of the refusal. In England, it had been deemed decorous to deny that such abominations existed: in Ireland, they were more than half confessed and approved. A Lord Glentworth "did not justify the burnings mentioned by the noble earl, *but at the same time he thought example necessary*;"—and Lord Chancellor Clare (Fitzgibbon) argued, on the subject of the torture, "*that there were certain cases which justified severity, and in which it became mercy; and he would submit whether the consequences provided against might not have been more terrible than the sufferings of the traitor by the picket.*"† With such a legislature tolerating and indulging such an executive, who

"Lord Edward said, 'without risking a general engagement, he would be able to get possession of Dublin.'

"'Suppose you did, my lord,' was the reply, 'the possession of the capital would not insure success; and even when you had taken the city, if the citizens asked to see the army of their brave deliverers, which might be encamped in the Phoenix-park, the citizens would naturally expect to see some military evolutions performed, some sort of military array exhibited on such an occasion. Who would there be, my lord, to put the people through these evolutions? What officers have you to teach them one military manœuvre; and if they were suddenly attacked by an army in the rear, what leader accustomed to the field have you to bring them with any advantage to the attack? You, my lord, are the only military man amongst us, but you cannot be everywhere you are required; and the misfortune is, you delegate your authority to those whom you think are like yourself; but they are not like you: we have no such persons amongst us.'

The delegates here assented to the justice of these remarks, declaring that the proposal for the aid of the French officers was a reasonable one; and they were proceeding to remonstrate, when Lord Edward impatiently reminded them *that they had no assistance to expect from France, and that consequently the determination had been come to, to prepare the country for an immediate rising.*"

* "GENERAL ORDERS.

"Dublin, February 26, 1798.

"The very disgraceful frequency of courts-martial, and the many complaints of irregularities in the conduct of the troops in this kingdom, having too unfortunately proved the army to be in a state of licentiousness which must render it formidable to every one but the enemy, the Commander-in-Chief thinks it necessary," &c.

Unable to abate the enormities against which he protested, Sir Ralph Abercromby shortly afterwards resigned in disgust, and was succeeded by General Lake.

† One case of *half-hanging* he met by assuring the house, that *nothing more was done than tying the rope about the man's neck to induce him to confess!*

will wonder that there was a National Committee issuing "detailed military instructions to Adjutant-Generals."

Things were now, as the National Committee correctly resolved, "hourly drawing to a crisis." Both parties stood finally committed; the government to coercion by fire, sword, and whip—the United Irishmen, to immediate and general insurrection, with or without French aid. Meanwhile events occurred, equally unanticipated on either side, which postponed the crisis some weeks beyond the period originally intended, and which materially altered the relative position of the parties, throwing the balance of power decidedly, and once for all, in favour of the government. This change in the aspect of affairs was the work of a man whose name must always occupy a prominent place in the history of 1798, as his character and motives will probably long continue to be a subject of controversy with historians—THOMAS REYNOLDS. Of this person's connexion—first with the United Irishmen, and afterwards with the government—the following is the best account which we have been able to collect.

Thomas Reynolds, originally a large silk-manufacturer in Dublin, at this period recently settled at Kilkea Castle, in the county of Kildare, an ancient baronial seat of the Fitzgeralds, held on perpetual lease from the Duke of Leinster (to whose family he was related on his mother's side), had begun his political life, at the age of 21, as a member of the Catholic Convention of 1792. Being attached to the cause of Catholic emancipation and religious equality, both by family connexion and personal conviction, he afterwards joined the Society of United Irishmen, and took the oath or test at the hands of Oliver Bond, in Dublin, in January or February, 1797. He was first a member of one of the lower societies, afterwards of a baronial committee. For some two or three months he attended the meetings pretty regularly; after which, occupied with his purchase of Kilkea Castle, and the winding-up of his affairs in Dublin, he withdrew for a while from politics, and ceased to take any part in the affairs of the society. So matters stood until November, in the course of which month Lord Edward Fitzgerald applied to Reynolds, begging him to act in his stead as colonel for the barony of Kilkea and Moone, alleging, as a reason, that his own activity had drawn upon him the suspicions of government, and that he wished to withdraw himself for a time. Reynolds at first objected; but Lord Edward was urgent (it was felt, probably, that Reynolds's castle of Kilkea and his extensive influence among the Catholics might both be serviceable in the approaching struggle), and at length the request was acceded to. On re-joining the Union, and entering on the duties of his colonelcy, Reynolds found that more was expected of him than he had undertaken to perform. It was intended that he should hold a civil as well as a military office, and he was urged to take the post of secretary or treasurer for the county. He chose the latter, as likely to be the less troublesome of the two, and thus became *ex-officio* a member of the committee for the province.

On the 18th of February, 1798, Reynolds was summoned to a county committee-meeting, held at a place called the Nineteen-mile House, about half-way between Dublin and Kilkea, to go through the forms of election requisite to constitute him a provincial delegate, and so complete his qualification for attending the provincial committee which was to meet the next day. At this county meeting of the 18th he met two members of

the provincial, of the names of Cummins and Daly, who, after the county committee-men had retired, admitted their new associate to the higher secrets of the Union, in order to prepare him for taking part in the business of the day following. They told him that all was ready for an immediate insurrection, which only awaited the arrival of a military force daily expected from France; and that one of the signals for open rebellion, and the first step to be taken to insure its success, would be to deprive the government of its principal active leaders, by the seizure—if necessary, the assassination—of about eighty individuals, of whose names Cummins produced a list including all the chief members of the administration.*

Reynolds was startled. It was the first he had heard of such schemes. He had been out of the business of the Union for ten months, had never before been initiated into the secrets of a provincial committee, and the present revelation was altogether new to him. He had taken the United Irishmen's oath, and sworn secrecy as to all proceedings under that oath; but the oath spoke only of "brotherhood of affection among Irishmen," and "equal, full, and adequate representation of the people," and was silent on the subject of insurrection and French invasion. He had allowed himself to be persuaded into accepting office in an illegal military organisation which lawyers called treasonable—but the example of the old Volunteers had shown that illegal military organisation for political ends did not necessarily mean actual rebellion; an armed demonstration like that of 1782, for obtaining Catholic emancipation and parliamentary reform, was not a thing which Irishmen at that day were accustomed to deem criminal. But this business of immediate insurrection, French invasion, and arrest of the members of the government (whether with or without assassination), was far more serious. Reynolds went home anxious and alarmed. The next day he stayed away from the provincial committee-meeting, sending an excuse for non-attendance. The day after that (if we may trust his own statement, reported by a partial biographer),

* "Life of Thomas Reynolds," by his Son, vol. i., pp. 187-189; vol. ii., p. 147.

That some such list as that above mentioned existed at the period, is highly probable; that, "if necessary, the assassination" of the persons named may have been an alternative contemplated by some extremely zealous individuals, is not violently improbable; and Reynolds's character may be allowed the benefit of the hypothesis. But the notion that assassination was ever adopted or sanctioned by the heads of the Union as a part of their policy, is distinctly negatived, both by the high character and the solemn declaration of members of the then Directory, whose lightest word is evidence. Thomas Addis Emmet, in his examination before the Secret Committee of the House of Lords (August 10, 1798), in reply to the question, "Was it not intended to cut off, in the beginning of the contest, the leaders of the opposition party by a summary mode, such as assassination?" said—

"I can answer that, while I was of the Executive, there was no such design, but the contrary, for we conceived that when one of you lost your lives we lost a hostage. *Our intention was to seize you all, and keep you as hostages for the conduct of England*; and, after the revolution was over, if you could not live under the new government, to send you out of the country."

To the same effect is Dr. Macneven's testimony (Examination, August 7):—

"We wished to see liberty established in our country with the least possible expense of private happiness, and in such a way that no honest man of either party should have cause to regret it."

The Executive Directory consisted, previously to the 12th of March, of Emmet, Macneven, Arthur O'Connor, Lord Edward Fitzgerald, and Oliver Bond.

he did the first thing which a man of honour and honesty should do in such a case:—

“ On the 20th of February, my father went to Dublin with my mother. A few hours after his arrival he met Mr. Richard M’Cormick, the same who had acted as Catholic secretary to the Convention, who told him that at the provincial meeting on the 19th he had ventured to recommend less violent measures, but that he was quickly silenced; and that on the same day, on going to the dinner at which all the members and many others of the association attended, he was so fearfully attacked and abused, that he fled for his life. He assured my father it was therefore his determination to realise his property and to quit Ireland, where he was well aware there would now be no safety for him;—a resolution which, happily for himself, he immediately put in execution. * * * My father afterwards, during that day and the next, saw some of the leaders, to whom he urged all he could against *their projects with safety to himself*. He had got a kind of proclamation which was then in circulation among the United Irishmen, recommending peace, industry, and sobriety, in the name of the Directory. With this in his hands, he asked *why they did not enforce its recommendations?* He was laughed at. He grew more serious, and threatened to quit them; when Mr. Samuel Neilson, of Belfast, said, “ *Take care what you do, Reynolds!—you know too much to stop now. We’ll have no half-measure men.* ”* ”

It now became a difficult and anxious question with Reynolds what he was to do. Admitted into dangerous confidences which he had not sought; implicated—unwittingly, reluctantly, yet as it seemed irrevocably—in a confederacy whose true nature and full extent were now, for the first time, disclosed to him; made the depository of secrets which it were at once shameful to betray, and perilous to keep; affected, both legally and morally, with a guilty knowledge of schemes which he utterly disapproved;—his position was one of infinite perplexity and hazard. He could not betray the conspirators who had trusted him as one of themselves—he must not allow the conspiracy to go on; yet how check it, without betrayal? It was as entangled a case of conscience as ever man had to solve. If Reynolds did not find the true solution, allowance may, perhaps, be made for a young man in his twenty-seventh year, affluent, well-connected, a husband and a father—surrounded with all the domestic and social circumstances that make martyrdom painful.

Reynolds chose a middle course. He hoped “so to neutralise the plans of the United Irishmen, as to stop them without compromising their personal safety, and at once to save his country, his friends, and his own honour.”† About the 25th of February, having occasion to take a journey into the country with a Mr. Cope, a Dublin merchant and an old friend of

* “Life of Thomas Reynolds,” vol. i., p. 197.

Neilson’s violence may well be accounted for. He was just released from a seventeen-months’ imprisonment, without specific charge and without trial, with broken health, ruined estate, and exasperated temper. Neilson was not the only wise and good man whom oppression had made mad.

† Ibid., p. 203.

his family, on a business matter in which they were jointly interested, Reynolds was led by Cope to talk of the state of the country. In the course of conversation, Cope (who was a friend of the government, and acquainted with some of its members), suspecting the United Irish politics of his companion, took the opportunity to represent in strong colours the "horrors of a revolution, the murders and devastation which would take place, and shocked" Reynolds "extremely." The conversation then took the following turn:—

"I told him *I believed I knew a person*, who, upon representing all that passed—who was not of a sanguinary disposition, who did not wish for murder or bloodshed—would desert the United Irishmen, and, in order to make amends for any crime he might have committed by joining them, would give to government such information as he was possessed of, which I did believe was very considerable. Mr. Cope seized upon this, and immediately said *that such a man would and ought to be placed higher in his country than any man that ever was in it*. I told him, *that neither honours nor rewards were looked for, or would be accepted of by the man, if he came forward*; but that I would call upon him in a day or two upon the business. We travelled together the whole day, from eight o'clock in the morning till six in the evening, and the conversation was principally upon those topics, so that there was a vast deal said. Two or three days after my arrival in town, I called upon Mr. Cope, *told him I had seen my friend, and had prevailed on him to come forward upon certain conditions*; that he had, I believed, considerable information to give. Mr. Cope misunderstood me in what I said, and immediately said, 'the man shall have greater conditions than he can wish for;' he said '*he should have a seat in parliament, be raised to honours, and have 1,500*l.* or 2,000*l.* a year.*' I told him *he misunderstood me, these were not the conditions*; but I would tell him, and they were these:—that he should not be prosecuted himself as a United Irishman upon any account whatever; that he should never be obliged or forced to prosecute any other person as a United Irishman; and that the channel through which the information came should be kept a secret—at least, for a time; and as the person would, immediately upon its being known to the United Irishmen, be murdered, if he remained in this country—and I was sure it would come out in a very short time—he would, as soon as he could arrange his affairs, go to England till matters were settled, and would require for that time that *any additional expenses he should be at should be defrayed*. Mr. Cope then pressed to know what would these be. I said that was impossible to tell; but, after some conversation, I stated that *he should be allowed to draw upon him for any sum not exceeding 500 guineas*. Mr. Cope again pressed considerable rewards, and expressed surprise that they would not be taken; but when he found I was positive, he then acquiesced."*

Reynolds then communicated all that he knew respecting the views and purposes of the United Irishmen, stating, in particular, that he believed

* Evidence on Trial of John M'Cann.—See Howell.

there was to be a meeting at Oliver Bond's house on the 12th of March, to make the final arrangements for a general rising; "but my father was careful," says his biographer, "not to name or inculpate any individual." The only name mentioned was that of Bond, as the proprietor of the house where the meeting was to be held. The affair proceeded as follows:—

"On the second interview my father was unable to state positively that the meeting was finally fixed for the 12th, nor did he know the precise hour at which it would be held. To enable the government effectually to stop the further proceedings of the conspirators, it was necessary that they should be made acquainted with those particulars. My father therefore sought an interview with M'Cann, who refused to give him the information he required until he produced his returns of men and money from the committee for the county of Kildare, which, as treasurer, he was expected to do. In order to procure these returns, my father went to Kilkea on the 3rd of March, and on the 4th he went to Castle Dermot, where he met his captains; and having settled the returns with them, he then proceeded to Daly, at Kilcullen, and got them; and on the 7th he returned to Dublin, and gave them to M'Cann, who promised to call on him on Sunday, the 11th, which he did, when he informed him that the meeting was fixed to take place on the morrow, at the house of Oliver Bond, at ten o'clock in the forenoon. My father then saw Mr. Cope for the third and last time on this subject, and at that interview merely gave him those particulars. He decidedly refused to entrust Mr. Cope with any other name, or any further particulars; and when the latter urged him to make further disclosures, he assured him that the person who had been in communication with him had gone to England, which at once put an end to all hope of obtaining further particulars through that channel; and as for himself, *he had made Mr. Cope believe that he was in no other way concerned than as a medium of communication from that third person.*"*

* "Life of Thomas Reynolds," vol. i., p. 206.

We have no especial partiality for the character of Mr. Thomas Reynolds, and services rendered to a Clare-and-Castlereagh government are not of a kind to awaken any very enthusiastic admiration. Still, truth is truth; and, as the name and memory of this man have been loaded with an obloquy which he does not seem to us to have deserved, we wish that his case should at least have a fair re-hearing. Premising that Reynolds is to be judged, not by the speeches of Curran at the bar and Burdett in the House of Commons, nor by the "supposes" and "undoubtedlys" of Mr. Moore's "Life of Lord Edward Fitzgerald," nor by the hereditary antipathies which the name of the Informer arouses in the heart of Irish patriotism, but only by the facts of his life—we here throw together the more material of these, from the date of his last communication with Cope to that of his first appearance in court as a crown witness. Most of the following statements will be found (variously coloured) in the pages of writers decidedly hostile to Reynolds—Dr. Madden, in particular. The authority of his son, when unsupported, has been accepted with the caution which the nature of the case suggests.

On the 11th of March (the day before the arrests) Reynolds called on Lord Edward Fitzgerald, and showed him a paper containing secret orders to a corps of yeomanry, of a tenor which indicated that government was on the alert to meet and put down some impending commotion. The motive alleged for this visit is, that Reynolds wished, without exciting suspicion against himself, to deter Lord Edward from attending the meeting at Bond's the next day. Such was the result. His lordship was greatly agitated, stayed away from the meeting, and escaped arrest during more than two months from that time.

This was by far the most important intelligence the government had as yet received. They were now in a position, by arresting the leaders and active managers of the Union, to confound their designs, and compel them

On the 14th and 15th of March, Reynolds called, by desire, on Lord Edward Fitzgerald, at his place of refuge in Aungier-street, discussed with his lordship plans of concealment and escape, declined receiving him at Kilkea Castle, on the ground that the connection of the families would make it an unsafe retreat; and, on Lord Edward stating at their first meeting that he had neither arms nor money, brought him, at the second, a case of pistols and 50 guineas. Mr. Moore says, "That Reynolds promptly gave information to his employers of the place and circumstances of this interview, there can hardly be any doubt." There is no doubt that Lord Edward Fitzgerald remained at large for upwards of two months from the date of this interview; and on the 11th of May it was found necessary to offer a thousand pounds reward for his apprehension. The account of the secret-service money contains the following item—"1798, June 20. F. H., Discovery of L. E. F., £1,000."

On the 18th of March, Reynolds attended a county meeting of United Irishmen, on the Curragh of Kildare. A member proposed that all the officers of county committees should be changed, as it was supposed that one of these must have furnished government with the information that led to the arrests of the 12th. Reynolds seconded the proposition, and was voted out of office with the rest. The question "Who is the traitor?" was angrily discussed; pointed insinuations were directed against Reynolds. He said, or swore, that he was innocent. On the 20th, he met some of his captains at Athy fair, and informed them of the determination of the county committee to change its officers. From that moment he never attended another meeting of United Irishmen.

On Sunday, the 25th of March, Reynolds attended the Catholic chapel of Mageny Bridge; after mass, ascended the steps of the altar, and, by permission of the priest, harangued the congregation, inveighing in strong terms against the disturbers of the public peace, and declaring that he would aid in bringing robbers and murderers to justice. His harangue had considerable effect, and some property recently plundered from a Captain Beaver was restored that night.

Reynolds was now preparing to leave the country—but it was not in his power. His former associates were bent on the destruction of the man whom they suspected of having betrayed them; and the government, ignorant that he was the source of the intelligence communicated through Cope, persecuted him mercilessly, as a man known to be of liberal politics, proved to possess influence with the Catholic peasantry, reputed to be a leader among the United Irishmen, and suspected as a relation of the Fitzgeralds. On the 20th of April, for which day he had invited a party of friends to a farewell dinner, Colonel Campbell, commander of the Athy district, sent a troop of the 9th Dragoons and a company of the Cork Militia—in all, 200 men and 86 horses—to live at Kilkea Castle at free quarters. They tore up the floors, tore down the wainscots and ceilings, and broke into the walls, in search of arms and ammunition; flogged the old steward till he was insensible, to make him confess where they were concealed; hacked the mahogany tables, smashed the pier glasses, demolished the pianofortes, made targets of the paintings, and inundated seventy acres of land by opening the sluices of a river. At the end of nine days they left the castle a wreck, the stone walls excepted. It remained an uninhabitable ruin for years.

Between the middle of April and the 3rd of May, Reynolds had three narrow escapes from assassination at the hands of the United Irishmen.

On the 5th of May, five of his captains lodged informations before Colonel Campbell against Reynolds, as a colonel in their system. He was arrested at Kilkea by a party of dragoons, and taken to Athy, to be tried at head quarters by martial law. From the short and sharp fate then usually consequent on martial-law trials he saved himself with great difficulty, by making representations of his case to Colonel Campbell which induced that officer to stay proceedings for a few hours, and send to Dublin for instructions. A note from Reynolds to Mr. Cope was permitted to accompany the colonel's dispatch. Cope instantly repaired to the Castle, and informed the Secretary, for the first time, that it was Reynolds who had given the information that led to the arrests of the 12th of March. The consequence was an order to Colonel Campbell to send his prisoner to Dublin, under a strong military escort. The apologies and regrets of the Castle authorities may be imagined.

The day after his arrival at Dublin Castle as a state prisoner Reynolds consented to

to act either at a disadvantage or not at all. The appointment for Monday, the 12th of March, at ten o'clock in the forenoon, was punctually kept by other persons than those regularly invited. Oliver Bond and thirteen delegates, forming the Leinster Provincial Committee, were taken, with all their papers, at Bond's house; and on the same day, Emmet and Macneven, with others of the leaders, were arrested at their own houses, brought to the Castle for examination, and committed to Newgate on charges of high treason. A warrant was issued for the arrest of Lord Edward Fitzgerald, who for the present eluded the vigilance of the authorities.

This was a crushing blow. Everything was done to retrieve it that zeal and courage could do—but the case was, in the nature of it, desperate. The new Directory had all the energy, but they lacked the working ability and experience of their predecessors. The chief management of the affairs of the Union was undertaken at this crisis by JOHN SHEARES, an earnest, ardent enthusiast—a man of books rather than of action and the world—of whom Barrington says, more truly than good-naturedly, that “he was well-educated, but mistook the phrases of republicanism for a power of writing in its defence, and of being a leader in its cause.” John Sheares, in concert with Lord Edward Fitzgerald, who still remained secreted in and about Dublin, strained every nerve to re-organise and re-animate the confederacy: but neither of them was a good conspirator. The one was only a student, and the other only a soldier; and it was not a time now either for the phrases of republicanism or for the open-hearted frankness of military gallantry. What shall we think of the blind, mad confidence which, at such a crisis, could hope to shake a Clare-and-Castlereagh tyranny by eloquence like the following:—

“Yet has this, their last treason, like all their former ones, turned
“with an overwhelming recoil upon themselves. On the memorable day
“which saw so many virtuous and respectable citizens of Dublin dragged
“ignominiously to prison, by arbitrary mandates unsupported by informa-
“tion on oath, confusion and trepidation marked the conduct of the op-

appear in court as crown witness, on condition that his grandfather, Thomas Fitzgerald, of Kilmead, should not be molested for his conduct or opinions; that his uncle, Captain Fitzgerald, of Geraldine, should be set at liberty; that he and his family should be protected from the personal violence of the United Irishmen; *and that no person who might be convicted upon his evidence should be executed, provided he would, after conviction, make a full disclosure of all he knew relative to the plans of the United Irishmen, and consent to banish himself.*

With the remainder of Reynolds's life we have here no concern. The government pensioned and employed him (in foreign consulships), and gave him £5,000 of the secret-service money: but it is not clear that he was a richer man after 1798 than he had been before. Of his legally-assessed claim for losses and injuries, he never received *eo nomine*, one shilling. In comfort, *status*, reputation, and everything else dear to man, he was an infinite loser—and he felt the loss.

On the whole, if Thomas Reynolds was not a very high-minded man, neither was he a monster of depravity. “*Spy and informer*” is his usual cognomen. The designation is singularly inappropriate. He was not a “spy,” in any sense of the word: he did not simulate zeal in order to win confidence and make a market of the secrets entrusted to him—from the hour that he resolved to frustrate the plans of his associates he began to withdraw from their society. Nor was he, in the worst sense of the word, an “informer:” his informations were without malice, and without falsehood. He failed—where not one man in a million could have succeeded—in the attempt to resume that neutrality between oppression and rebellion which he had once relinquished, to save a wicked government without wounding and exasperating a wronged people.

“pressors; while the unclouded serenity, the calm, unassuming fortitude of conscious innocence, beamed from the countenance of the oppressed. With mingled horror and contempt the capital saw the *Prime-Miscreant*, THE ROBESPIERRE OF IRELAND, the nefarious author and apologist of atrocities without name and number, appalled by the mere gaze of Irish eyes, and shaking in a paroxysm of rage and terror while the murderous weapon trembled in his palsied hand, the strong thirst of blood struggling in vain with the still stronger impulses of conscious guilt and native cowardice.

“For us, the keen but momentary anxiety, occasioned by the situation of our invaluable friends, subsided, on learning all the circumstances of the case, into a calm tranquillity, a consoling conviction of mind that they are as safe as innocence can make men now; and to these sentiments were quickly added a redoubled energy, a tenfold activity of exertion, which has already produced the happiest effects. *The organisation of the capital is perfect.*”*

The Leinster Committee was, in fact, speedily re-constituted, so far as “organisation” went; and again we find the hearts of the patriots cheered with visions of immediate insurrection and French aid. At a meeting of the Ulster Provincial Committee (March 25th)—

“It was referred to the Leinster delegate to give the reports. He accordingly said, *he was happy to tell them the Leinster Provincial Committee was perfectly recovered from the shock*: they were only four days from the time they were taken till they had the whole province in a complete state of organisation. The government had also taken three of the Executive, but there were three appointed in their places that very evening after they were taken. He said, the Leinster Executive had delegated him to wait on us to answer some questions which he read from a paper. They were to the following effect:—The number of the United Irishmen who would act if called upon; the number of arms; the number of military and militia, and how many good and bad; with a recommendation for the people to put themselves immediately into as good a state of organisation as possible; for that *they had a delegate arrived with positive assurances that the French would commence embarkation on the first of April, and that they would be all on board by the middle of the month, and ready to sail the first opportunity after.*”†

And again, on the first of April, we see them as patiently as ever believing without evidence, and hoping against hope:—

“A delegate from Dublin said, that the Leinster Executive had received a letter from Bartholomew Teeling, who is one of our delegates in France, stating that *the French troops would most certainly be on board by the middle of this month*. He said the troops from Brest and that neighbourhood were determined to try to evade the British fleet, and to land in Ireland. Of course, the British fleet would follow them round, and while thus drawn off, *all the other troops embarked at other*

* Address of John Sheares to the People of Ireland, 17th of March.

† Report of the Secret Committee of 1798, Appendix xiv.

ports would make a descent on England. Whatever might result from this attempt, it was the fixed determination of the National Committee, in case the French should be frustrated, that we should of ourselves make a rising. He said that the citizens of Dublin, with the assistance of the army, could seize the capital at any moment. He informed them that the leaders in Leinster were particularly active in organising the military committees, as were also some of our Ulster friends who are at present there.”*

Meanwhile, to the phrases of republicanism, and the organisation of military committees, the government opposed not phrases but bayonets, not organisation but action—prompt, hard, and cruel. The “wish that the people would rebel” had now matured itself into a maxim of policy, a deliberate ministerial purpose. They were determined that the people *should* rebel, before the arrival of a French force rendered rebellion really formidable. On the 30th of March, the kingdom was officially declared to be in state of insurrection, by the following

“PROCLAMATION,

“BY THE LORD LIEUTENANT AND COUNCIL OF IRELAND.

“WHEREAS a traitorous conspiracy existing within this kingdom, for the subversion of the authority of his Majesty and the parliament, and for the destruction of the established constitution and government, hath considerably extended itself, and hath broken out into acts of *open violence and rebellion*:

“We have, therefore, by and with the advice of his Majesty’s Privy Council, issued the most direct and positive orders to the officers commanding his Majesty’s forces *to employ them with the utmost vigour and decision for the immediate suppression thereof*, and also to recover the arms which have been traitorously forced from his Majesty’s peaceable and loyal subjects, *and to disarm the rebels, and all persons disaffected to his Majesty’s government, by the most summary and effectual measures.*

“Given at the council-chamber in Dublin, the 30th day of March, 1798.

“CLARE, &c. &c. &c.”

This proclamation was immediately followed up, in many counties, by military notices to the inhabitants, threatening them that, unless all concealed arms and ammunition were given up within ten days, *“the troops should be quartered in large bodies to live at FREE QUARTERS among them, and other very severe means would be used to enforce obedience.”*

In attributing to the government at this period a deliberate policy of exasperation, a determination to get up rebellion for the sake of putting it down, we are simply adopting their own interpretation of their own acts. The horrible imputation is not one of inference; it is not the calumnious invention of disappointed and baffled sedition; it stands on the evidence of their own confession—their own boast, rather—coolly published to the world some months later. The Secret Committee say, in their Report (August, 1798)—

“It appears, from a variety of evidence laid before your committee,

* Report of the Secret Committee of 1798, Appendix xiv.

" *that the rebellion would not have broken out so soon as it did, had it not been for the well-timed measures adopted by government*, subsequent to the proclamation of the Lord Lieutenant and council bearing date the 30th of March, 1798; as it is notorious that in many counties the effect of those measures was such, in dissolving the Union, and in obliging the people to surrender their arms, that it became evident to the generality of their leaders they had no other alternative but to rise at once or to abandon their purpose. * * * From the *vigorous and summary expedients resorted to by government*, and the consequent exertions of the military, the leaders found themselves *reduced to the alternative of immediate insurrection*, or of being deprived of the means on which they relied for effecting their purpose; and to this cause is exclusively to be attributed that premature and desperate effort, the rashness of which has so evidently facilitated its suppression."*

The "well-timed measures," the "vigorous and summary expedients," consisted in the renewal, extension, and aggravation of all the magisterial and military atrocities of previous years—the floggings, the picketings, the half-hangings, the house-burnings, the free quarters (which included all the rest)—with such additions and improvements as a devilish ingenuity could devise.

"The army," says an eye-witness and sufferer, "now distributed through the country in *free quarters*, gave loose to all the excesses of which a licentious soldiery are capable; '*formidable*,' in the language of the gallant Abercromby, '*to all but the enemy*.' From the humble cot to the stately mansion, no property, no person was secure. Numbers perished under the lash; many were strangled in the fruitless attempt of extorting confessions; and hundreds were shot at their peaceful avocations, in the very bosom of their families, for the wanton amusement of a brutal soldiery. The torture of the *pitch-cap* was a subject of amusement both to officers and men, and the agonies of the unfortunate victim, writhing under the blaze of the combustible material, were increased by the yells of the soldiery and the pricking of their bayonets, until his sufferings were often terminated by death.

"The torture practised in those days of Ireland's misery has not been equalled in the annals of the most barbarous nation, and the world has been astonished, at the close of the eighteenth century, with acts which the eye views with horror, and the heart sickens to record. Torture was resorted to, not only on the most trivial, but groundless occasions. It was inflicted without mercy on every age and every condition: the child, to betray the safety of the parent; the wife, the partner of her conjugal affection; and the friend and brother have expired under the lash, when the generous heart scorned to betray the defenceless brother or friend. The barbarous system of torture practised at Beresford's Riding House, Sandy's Provost, the old Custom House, and other depôts of human misery in the capital, under the very eye of the executive, makes the blood recoil with horror, while we blush for the depravity of man under the execrable feelings of his perverted nature. In the centre

* In Macneven's examination before the Committee (August 7th), we find the following significant question:—

Lord Castlereagh—"You acknowledge the Union would have become stronger, *but for the means taken to make it explode?*"

“ of the city, the heart-rending exhibition was presented of a human being, endowed with all the faculties of a rational soul, rushing from the infernal dépôt of torture and death; his person besmeared with a burning preparation of turpentine and pitch, plunging in his distraction into the Liffey, and terminating at once his sufferings and his life.

“ ‘ You are come too late,’ exclaimed a young man to those unfeeling monsters; ‘ I am now beyond your power. My information was feigned, but it afforded me a moment’s respite; I knew you would discover the artifice, I knew the fate that awaited me, but I have robbed you of your victim. Heaven is more merciful than you’—and he expired. This melancholy transaction occurred in the town of Drogheda, in the spring of 1798. The unhappy victim was a young man of delicate frame; he had been sentenced to 500 lashes, and received a portion of them with firmness; but, dreading lest bodily suffering might subdue the fortitude of his mind, he requested that the remainder should be suspended, and his information taken. Being liberated from the triangles, he directed his executioners to a certain garden, where he informed them arms were concealed. In their absence he deliberately cut his throat. The arms not being discovered, for none were there, the disappointed and irritated party hastened back to inflict the remainder of the punishment;—he only lived to pronounce the words which I have reported.

“ About the same period, and in the same populous town, the unfortunate Bergan was tortured to death. He was an honest, upright citizen, and a man of unimpeachable moral conduct. He was seized on by those vampires, and in the most public street stripped of his clothes, placed in a horizontal position on a cart, and torn with the cat-o-nine-tails long after the vital spark was extinct. The alleged pretence for the perpetration of this horrid outrage was, that a small gold ring had been discovered on his finger, bearing a national device, the ‘shamrock,’ of his unfortunate country.”*

* Teeling’s “Personal Narrative,” pp. 132-135.

“ Various other violent acts,” says Flowden, “ were committed; so far as to cut away pieces of men’s ears, even sometimes the whole ear, or a part of the nose.”

In all these atrocities of the troops “formidable to every one but the enemy,” the Orange yeomanry and militia were the foremost actors.

But we need not crowd our pages with these sickening abominations, the public acts and proclamations of the government suggest all the rest. We doubt whether the world has yet seen more than one government capable of the following piece of cold-blooded insolence and cruelty:—

“ WHEREAS it has been reported to Lieutenant-General Sir James Stuart, that in some parts of the county, where it has been necessary to place troops at free-quarters for the restoration of public tranquillity, that general subscriptions of money have been entered into by the inhabitants, to purchase provisions for the troops, by which means the end proposed of making the burthen fall as much as possible on the guilty is entirely defeated, by making it fall in a light proportion on the whole, and thereby easing and protecting the guilty; it has been thought proper to direct, that wherever the practice has been adopted, or shall be attempted, the general officers commanding divisions of the southern district shall immediately double, triple, and quadruple the number of soldiers so stationed, and shall send out regular foraging parties, to provide provisions for the troops, in the quantities mentioned in the former notice, bearing date the 27th day of April, 1798; and that they shall move them from station to station through the district or barony, until all arms are surrendered and tranquillity be perfectly restored, and until it is reported to the general officers, by the gentlemen holding landed property and those who are employed in collecting the public revenues and tithes, that ALL RENTS, TAXES, AND TITHES ARE COMPLETELY PAID UP.”

“ Adjutant-General’s Office, Cork, May 7, 1798.”

"*Pray, Mr. Emmet, what caused the late insurrection?*" asked Lord Chancellor Clare, when all the mischief was done. The answer was — "*The free-quarters, house-burnings, tortures, and military executions in the counties of Kildare, Carlow, and Wicklow.*" O'Connor and Macneven gave the same answer to the same question.

The "well-timed measures" were successful. The people, goaded beyond all endurance by the barbarities of military licence, and hopeless of the long-promised and long-deferred succours from France, would bear no further delay: they would have their insurrection at once, or not at all. The thing had dragged on month after month, till they were getting tired of it; they had been organising and negotiating, making returns and sending delegates, for some three years, till their best men were in prison and their best counties disarmed—and it was time, or it never would be time, that something better came of it than the phrases of republicanism and the realities of the pitch-cap and triangles. Distrustful of their leaders, of their allies, of each other, and almost of themselves, they demanded, with a reckless despondency, to be led into instant action.*

At length, early in May, the plan was arranged and the day fixed. The whole force of the Union in the three counties of Dublin, Wicklow, and Kildare, headed by Lord Edward Fitzgerald, was to advance simultaneously on the capital, surprise the camp at Loughlinstown, and the artillery station at Chapelizod, and seize as hostages the Lord Lieutenant and the Privy Council. Intelligence was to be given to the other provinces by the detention of the mails, the non-arrival of which would be the signal for the North and South to rise. The time fixed was the night of the 23rd of May.

The government, meanwhile, had its eye on every one of the conspirators; dogged their every step, knew their every thought; worked with them as tools, played with them as puppets, to be thrown away and broken when done with. On the 19th of May, one "F. H." earned a thousand pounds of secret-service money, by guiding "the Major and his People" to the hiding-place of Lord Edward Fitzgerald. On the 21st, John Sheares and his brother Henry were arrested on the information of a certain Militia Captain JOHN WARNEFORD ARMSTRONG, who had been running backwards and forwards every day for ten days together between them and Lord Castlereagh. The 23rd of May came—and the Rebellion came; but the rebel army missed its General, and the rebel councils had lost their Director.

* See the minutes of meetings in April and May (Report of Secret Committee, Appendix xiv.)

CHAPTER XIV.

THE WAR.

THE city of Dublin, on the night of the 23rd of May, gave ample signs that the hour was at last come. Parliament had the day before been informed, by a Lord Lieutenant's message, that "in the course of that week" the war might be expected to begin, in the capital, at the seat of government itself: and the streets of the metropolis had thereupon witnessed the novel and awful spectacle of a solemn procession of the Commons of Ireland, "two and two, preceded by the Speaker, the Serjeant-at-Arms, and all the officers of the House," carrying up to the viceregal residence the expression of their "horror and indignation," their "determined resolution and energy." The note of preparation was not sounded prematurely. As the fatal day drew on, the signs of the impending crisis became too manifest and multiplied to be mistaken. Gentlemen found themselves suddenly deserted by their servants, merchants and manufacturers by their clerks, artificers, and porters, who went off in haste to join the armed or half-armed bands that were known to beset the city in every direction for twenty or thirty miles round—the few who remained being more dreaded, as spies and, possibly, assassins, than the many who took the field as open rebels;* families were flying to England; all labour and amusement were alike suspended, and the busiest haunts of peaceful industry were full of military array and bustle: everything united to oppress men's imaginations with the boding of some vast undefined calamity. The very extent and rapidity of the preparations for public security only added to the public terror, by imaging the public danger.

With the approach of night the general consternation rose to its highest pitch. It was known that the metropolis was to be the first point of attack; but when, where, and how the attack would begin, no man could tell—there was no knowing but it might have begun already. At an early hour after the departure of the mails, fugitives came hurrying into the city with tidings that the roads were intercepted in all directions; that on the north towards Swords and Santry, and on the south under the Rathfarnham mountains, large bodies of men were already gathering: but of their numbers, leaders, arms, intentions, and resources, no account was to be had. All was confusion, and every rumour was extravagantly exaggerated. The drums beat to arms, the garrison and the various corps of yeomanry were got ready for action; but how and where to act no man knew: no one knew his station, or could ascertain his duties. Orders were issued and revoked; positions were assigned and countermanded—all was confused, indecisive, and unintelligible. No probable point of attack was

* Plowden says ("Historical Review," vol. ii, p. 693), "It is a most melancholy proof of the progress of rebellion, that every person, almost without distinction, in and about Dublin, whose situation in life put him in the occasion of retaining any number of men, either as servants, artificers, workmen, or labourers, was suddenly left and abandoned by those persons attending their respective posts for the general rising."

indicated, no precise, understood plan of defence was announced; the night was pitch dark (the lamp-lighters having mostly struck work on the occasion)—the only principle of military action appeared to be that very simple and ancient one, "Every man for himself, and God for us all."*

"The cavalry and infantry in Smithfield," says an eye-witness, "were in some places so compactly interwoven that a dragoon could not wield his sword without cutting down a foot-soldier, nor a foot-soldier discharge his musket without knocking down a trooper.† Five hundred rebels with long pikes, coming on rapidly in the dark, might without difficulty have assailed the yeomen at once from five different points. * * * All the barristers, attorneys, merchants, bankers, revenue officers, shopkeepers, students of the university, doctors, apothecaries, and corporators of an immense metropolis, in red coats, with a sprinkling of parsons—all doubled up together amid bullock-stalls and sheep-pens, awaiting in profound darkness (not with impatience) for invisible executioners to dispatch them without mercy—was not, abstractedly, a situation to engender much hilarity. Scouts now and then came, only to report their ignorance; a running buzz went round that the videts were driven in; and the reports of distant musketry, like a twitch of electricity, gave a slight but perceptible movement to men's muscles. A few faintly-heard shots on the north side also seemed to announce that the vanguard of the Santry men was approaching. In the meantime, no orders came from the general; and if there had, no orders could have been obeyed. * * * Never did the rebels lose so favourable an opportunity of covering a field of battle with distinguished carcasses."‡

It was found, at break of day, that the insurgents, both at Santry and Rathfarnham, had been deterred by the military preparations of the capital from executing their plan of a simultaneous attack. They had stopped the mail coaches, shot the coachmen, and burned some houses; but their further efforts had been disconcerted by Lord Jocelyn's Fox-Hunters (a cavalry corps, so called from their fine horses), who had marched rapidly on one of their parties, sabred several, taken a few prisoners, and dispersed the remainder.

On the 24th, the reign of terror, and of the cruelty that waits on terror, formally began in Dublin. Martial law was declared all over Ireland, by a viceregal proclamation, ordering "ALL the general officers commanding his Majesty's forces, to punish all persons acting, aiding, or in any manner assisting in the rebellion which now exists in this kingdom, *according to martial law, either by death or otherwise*" (by whipping, house-burning, half-hanging, pitch-capping, for instance), "as to them shall seem expedient for the punishment and suppression of all rebels in the

* See Barrington's "Historic Memoirs," vol. ii., p. 255. Sir Jonah, as head of a corps of cavalry patrol, "very narrowly escaped breaking his neck in an excavation." He says, "there was not a spark of light to fight by."

† "Smithfield is a long and very wide street, open at both ends, one of which is terminated by the quays and river; it is intersected by narrow streets, and formed altogether one of the most disagreeable positions in which to cram an immense body of demi-disciplined men and horses in solid mass, without any other order than 'If you are attacked, defend yourselves to the last extremity.'"

‡ Barrington, *ubi sup.*—"Steady in the rear," or, 'What the devil are you afraid of,' were the only intelligible expressions (curses excepted) which were uttered during the popping of the musketry."

several districts." Notices were issued to the citizens to keep within doors from nine at night till five in the morning; to place on the outside of their house-doors lists of all persons in their respective dwellings; and to surrender all unregistered arms in their possession, under penalty of being "forthwith sent on board his Majesty's navy." The bridges were strongly palisaded, and military guards set night and day. Parliament continued sitting; and the courts of law remained open for the adjudication of civil causes: but legislation and judicature both wore the livery of war. Senators legislated, barristers pleaded, and juries found verdicts "in uniform, with their side-arms;" one of the judges even (Baron Medge) made his appearance on the bench in soldier's garb. The Commons lent their committee-room to a court martial; while in the House itself, representatives of the people were found who deemed even *that* a too-tedious and needless formality.* Military executions began, and continued with unabated activity, on the bridges and the lamp-irons, till habit soon reconciled men to what, at first, was not only disgusting but horrible. "The city assumed altogether the appearance of one monstrous barrack, or slaughter-house."†

The war, meanwhile, had begun at the time and (so far as circumstances allowed) in the manner appointed. The prime movers of the conspiracy were in prison; the General who was to have taken the field in Kildare, and whose name and presence would have inspired universal confidence, and concentrated the whole physical force of the midland and metropolitan counties in one combined movement, was slowly dying, in Dublin Newgate, of the wounds inflicted by his captors; the whole system was disorganised, and the rebellion might have been supposed to be dead before its birth. But there was life in it still—the life of revenge smarting under intolerable wrong and insult, and of terror maddened into rage by worse things yet in prospect. Free-quarters and house-burnings saved the shattered and crumbling confederacy from the dissolution that seemed to menace it.‡

* On the 25th of May, Colonel Maxwell—since better known as the *Saint Farnham* of ultra-evangelical, Reformation-Society celebrity—"submitted to the wisdom of the house whether it would not be right and necessary that *military executions should have retrospect to those persons who were then confined*, and that they should be disposed of *as expeditiously as possible*, in order that the rebels who looked up to them as leaders might no longer derive any encouragement from the expectation of rescuing them at a future day from their captivity."

Even Lord Castlereagh thought this too bad. His lordship "most earnestly besought gentlemen that they would not suffer the zeal and warmth of their feelings on this occasion to run away with their good sense; that they would not proceed to that which would be unconstitutional indeed."

† On the morning of the 24th, says Barrington, the bodies of the insurgents sabred by the Fox-Hunters were brought in a cart to Dublin, and "*stretched out in the Castle-yard, where the Viceroy then resided, and in full view of the Secretary's windows*. They lay on the pavement, as trophies of the first skirmish, during a hot day, cut and gashed in every part, covered with clotted blood and dust, the most frightful spectacle which ever disgraced a royal residence, save the seraglio."

‡ Lady Louisa Conolly writes, on the 21st of May—"This last week has been a most painful one to us. Maynooth, Kilcock, Leixlip, and Celbridge have had part of a Scotch regiment quartered at each place, *living upon free-quarters, and every day threatening to burn the towns*. I have spent days in entreaties and threats to give up the horrid pikes; some houses burned at Kilcock yesterday produced the effect. Maynooth held out yesterday, though some houses were burnt, and some people punished. This morning, the people of Leixlip are bringing in their arms. Celbridge as yet holds out, though five houses are now burning."—Moore's "Life of Lord Edward Fitzgerald," vol. ii., p. 100.

The first insurgent movements, though apparently fortuitous, irregular and confused, still bore traces of the original plan. The peasantry of the metropolitan district, without leaders, with little ammunition, with no other arms than clumsy pikes and a few guns in bad order, rose on the night of the 23rd, stopped the northern, southern, and Connaught mails, and so far acted on the original scheme as to attempt, by separate but simultaneous onsets, the surprisal of military posts and the hemming-in of the capital from external succours. That night, and the following day, there was much skirmishing with small parties of the royal troops, and several towns near the seat of government were attacked. The war may be said to have broken out at Naas, in Kildare, about fourteen miles from Dublin. On the morning of the 24th, a body of about a thousand insurgents, led by one Michael Reynolds, made an attempt to surprise that town, having previously concealed numerous parties of their friends in the houses and gardens of the inhabitants, who were very generally disposed to favour them. On the entry of the assailants, their confederates rushed out from their hiding-places to join them. The alarm was given by a shout that the town was their own, and by shots fired into the apartments of Lord Gosford, who commanded in the place with three hundred of the Armagh militia and some cavalry. But his lordship had been apprised, by anonymous letters, of the intended assault—the garrison had been reinforced, and was on the alert—the rebels were quickly repulsed, and pursued with slaughter. They were completely dispersed, many of them taken prisoners, and immediately hanged.

A similar result attended an attack on the town of Carlow, in the course of the following night. A body of insurgents, amounting to a thousand or fifteen hundred, having assembled on the grounds of Sir Edward Crosbie, a mile and a half distant from the town, marched in at two o'clock in the morning of the 25th, shouting with all the careless confidence of anticipated triumph. But the garrison (four hundred and fifty men, under Colonel Mahon) were prepared and posted to receive them, having had information of the plans of the insurgents by an intercepted letter. A destructive fire was opened on the intruders; they recoiled, and attempted a retreat, but their flight was cut off by troops posted in their rear. Numbers of them took refuge in the houses, which were immediately fired by the soldiers; eighty houses, with some hundred men, were burned to ashes. Here, as elsewhere, the end of the battle was the beginning of murderous military executions; about two hundred were speedily dispatched by hanging or shooting, according to martial law. Among the first victims was Sir Edward Crosbie, whose lawn the insurgents had made their rendezvous, but who had borne no part, directly or indirectly, in the rising. He was tried in the usual fashion of Irish courts-martial of 1798; and condemned and shot as a United Irishman.*

The first results of the insurrection were generally of this character;

* The case of this gentleman excited much sympathy; in any other time and country than Ireland in 1798 it would have called forth horror and execration. The Rev. James Gordon says ("History of Ireland," vol. ii., p. 393), "Protestant loyalists, witnesses in favour of the accused, were forcibly prevented by the bayonets of the military from entering the court; Catholic prisoners had been tortured by repeated floggings to force them to give evidence against him." His real offence was an opinion in favour of emancipation and reform.

hasty, desultory assaults on small towns, in which the insurgents, with great numerical superiority and abundance of bravery, were easily and utterly defeated by the better arms, discipline and organisation of the king's troops. In some instances the issue was different. At Dunboyne and Barretstown small parties of fencibles were routed. At the little town of Prosperous, in Kildare, seventeen miles from Dublin, about an hour after midnight on the 23rd, a party of insurgents surprised a few military who garrisoned it, fired the barracks, burned or piked the soldiers together with their commander, and took temporary possession of the place. Of more moment and interest was the action of Kilcullen, a few hours later, which had peculiar significance, as affording the first practical demonstration of the power and value of the *pike*. A division of three hundred pikemen was thrice furiously charged by a body of British dragoons, under the command of General Dundas, and the dragoons were thrice repulsed with great slaughter. The experiment had an importance far beyond that of the immediate occasion. The people began to learn where their real strength lay—not in any humble imitation of the equipment and discipline of the enemy, but in their own physical force wielding their national weapon—and soon came to fear not the face of British dragoons.*

Generally, however, the insurrection in the midland and metropolitan counties was a failure. There was no lack of valour on the part of the insurgents; quite enough was done to show what might have been done under a leader like Lord Edward Fitzgerald, of talents, character, rank and military experience, who would have concentrated the scattered and divided popular forces into one mass, and directed their movements with military skill and science. But the loss of him was one which there was no repairing or compensating. Kildare had for nominal Commander-in-Chief the brave and enterprising AYLMER: a leader abundantly qualified to achieve victory, wherever victory was possible, but his name had not the *prestige* of Lord Edward's. The people fought in detail—in detached parties, under separate leaders, without concert and without skill—and were for the most part defeated in detail. The want of able and experienced leaders was the occasion, on the 26th of May, of a more serious defeat than any which the popular troops had yet sustained. A body of about four thousand insurgents, admirably posted on the Hill of Tara, in Meath, with everything to ensure a cheap and easy victory except an officer who knew the military value of the position, and to whose sole authority they paid implicit obedience, hastily quitted their ground on the approach of some

* "The pike, at the commencement, very frequently succeeded against the regular, and always against the Yeomanry cavalry; and in close combat with even the infantry, it proved in some instances irresistible. The extreme expertness with which the Irish handled the pike was surprising. By withdrawing, they could shorten it to little more than the length of a dagger, and in a second dart it out to its full extent. At Old Kilcullen they entirely repulsed General Dundas and the heavy cavalry in a regular charge, killing two captains and many soldiers; the General escaped with great difficulty by the fleetness of his horse. At New Ross they entirely broke the heavy horse by their pikes. A solid mass or deep column of determined pikemen could only be broken by artillery, or a heavy fire of musketry. Well served artillery they could not withstand, if not close enough to be rushed upon. Colonel Foot's detachment of infantry was nearly annihilated by the pike at Oulard; only the Major and two others escaped."—Barrington's "Historic Memoirs."

Holt says, in his "Memoirs" (vol. i., p. 43), "I soon found the value of the pike against cavalry."

four hundred royalist troops, and rushed down on their assailants in the plain below. The British infantry fled from the charge of the pike; but the phalanx of pikemen was speedily broken by the enemy's artillery. The result was a complete rout; the county of Meath was disabled, and the scheme of the insurgents for opening a communication between Dublin and the North was totally frustrated. Of the broken remnant of the Meath forces, the majority dispersed: a few of the more determined remained in arms, and joined the ranks of Aylmer in Kildare.

The rout of Tara Hill, together with the previous discomfitures sustained by the United forces, had thus, in a very few days, broken the strength of the insurrection in the eastern counties. Discouraged by successive defeats, the insurgents began to evince a general disposition to relinquish their efforts and disperse. On the 31st, at Knockawlin Hill, on the borders of the Curragh of Kildare, General Dundas received the surrender of a chief of the name of Perkins, and two thousand men, on the terms of a free pardon and an unmolested return to their homes. The insurgents, says Plowden, "dispersed in all directions with shouts of joy, leaving thirteen cart-loads of pikes behind." But the disposition to surrender soon received a fatal damper. On the 3rd of June, a party of some hundreds, having stipulated for similar terms, repaired by appointment to a place called the Gibbet Rath, on the Curragh, to meet Major-General Sir James Duff, then on his march from Limerick with a division of six hundred men, and fulfil their part of the engagement. By an act of atrocity and perfidy together, which only the history of Ireland in 1798 can parallel, and of which the alleged "accident" that gave occasion to it is but a slender palliation, the intended pacific surrender was met by a cruel and cowardly massacre. One of the insurgents, before giving up his musket, discharged it in the air, with the muzzle upwards. The act was construed into a violation of the treaty; the soldiers fired on the disarmed and unresisting multitude, who were "crowded together in a place neither fit for defence nor escape, a wide plain without hedge, ditch, or bog;" they fled with the utmost precipitation, and were butchered without mercy by the Jocelyn Fox-Hunters. The numbers of the slaughtered on this occasion are variously stated at two hundred, and three hundred and fifty. No part of the infamy of this transaction attaches to General Dundas, who knew nothing of it at the time, and evinced his utter abhorrence of it afterwards. But the whole of it was deliberately adopted by the House of Commons. The Honourable House voted its almost unanimous thanks to Sir James Duff, and General Dundas was vehemently censured in debate for "treating with, and receiving ambassadors from rebels with arms in their hands."

By this outbreak of military ferocity, the expiring rebellion of the eastern counties was kindled into new life, and prolonged far beyond its natural term of existence. At once disheartened and enraged, the insurgents maintained for many weeks, under the skilful generalship of Aylmer, a fugitive and partisan warfare, cutting off the enemy's supplies, storming their outposts, harassing their marches, checking and chastising their violences, with a fertility and boldness of invention, and a rapidity of execution, which overcame all disadvantages of circumstance and position. Aylmer did not lay down his arms until the complete and final suppression of the rebellion generally had made the cause hopeless. He ultimately

capitulated to General Dundas, on terms honourable to himself and favourable to his brave companions in arms.*

Theobald Wolfe Tone writes, on the 20th of June, on receipt of the first news of the outbreak—"In all this business *I do not see one syllable about the North*, which astonishes me more than I can express." The reader probably participates in this astonishment: the rebellion has now been going on for a week and more, yet we do not see one syllable about the North. Ulster, the first of all the provinces of Ireland in organisation, and the loudest in boasting of its organisation; the camp of the old Volunteers; the theatre of Dungannon Conventions and Belfast Reform-meetings; the source and centre of the United Irish Societies, old and new; the first to experience and resent the irritants of Orangeism and martial law—Ulster, which has hitherto filled the front place in our history, has now shrunk back into silence and inaction. The 23rd of May was come and gone—the men of Leinster had been in the field for upwards of a week, winning battles and losing them—still all was quiet in the North. Ulster, it seems, was still busy "organising" itself: the organisation had been going on for some seven years, but was not yet finished. The Secret Committee present us, in their Report, with the following curious document:—

"Provincial Meeting, May 29th, Armagh."

"Nine members present. Heard, from the last provincial reports, that a plan of insurrection was in contemplation by the National Executive. Two members were deputed from the Ulster Executive to form the said plan, in conjunction with certain deputies from the other provincial Executive. The plan was, for Dublin to rise and to seize on the government, and the mail-coaches were to be burned for a signal for the whole kingdom to act. These delegates returned and reported the same to the Ulster Executive. The reporter complained *that the Ulster Executive had taken no measures to put the people in readiness to act*. Every application had been made to the Executive to call the Adjutant-Generals together, but without effect; they were required also to summon the provincial delegates together, to put the respective counties in a state ready to act, and that they did not obey. *He thought they completely betrayed the people, both of Leinster and Ulster*; and he thought it the duty of the present committee to denounce and vote them out of office, and to take some speedy and vigorous measures to second the efforts of the people in the upper counties. They were accordingly voted out of

* On leaving Ireland, in pursuance of the terms of his surrender, Aylmer went to the Continent, entered the Austrian service, and met with rapid promotion. "Many years afterwards," says Teeling ("Personal Narrative", Sequel, p. 188), "when the Austrian cavalry was regarded as a model of perfection by the Continental states, the Regent of England solicited from the Emperor the services of an experienced officer, for the instruction of the British cavalry in that system of tactics which had rendered his squadrons the admiration of the military world. The Emperor acceded to the request, and the officer whom he selected for this important service was William Aylmer! Aylmer arrived in England, executed his commission, was honoured with the approbation of the highest personage in the state, and presented with a splendid token of royal favour. But the prejudice of other times was revived, when in the person of the Austrian officer was recognised the Rebel Chief who twenty years before had marshalled the United forces on the plains of Kildare."

He died in the service of Bolivar and the Columbian Republic.

"office. * * * The reporter then asked the delegates individually, "if they thought the people they represented would act?"—and they all said they would, except Down: its delegate observed, that he would not exactly answer whether it would or not, but he would try and ascertain it before taking the sense of the Adjutant-Generals and Colonels. It was then resolved that the Adjutant-Generals of Down and Antrim should meet next day; and, in case that the two counties would act, that they should form a general plan of insurrection, and that they should send the said plan by express to the different Adjutant-Generals throughout the province, that they should all act at the same moment. In case the insurrection was not agreed upon, they were to meet at Belfast on the 24th of June: BUT IT WAS GENERALLY THE OPINION THAT THEY WERE ALL TO RETURN TO THEIR RESPECTIVE OCCUPATIONS AND INDUSTRY, AND NOT MEET AGAIN AND DECEIVE THE PEOPLE ANY LONGER."

Truly, a most lame and impotent conclusion to seven years of agitating and organising!

The fact is, Ulster had too much organisation. "Ulster," says Teeling, "had the command of a powerful force; her people were impatient for action, waiting orders from their superior officers, *but in too high a state of organisation to act without them*"*—and the best of them were in prison. The organisation of this province was too minute, elaborate, and technical. Organisation, indeed, it was not—but mechanism; a substitute for the energies and passions of living men, rather than their vital, spontaneous expression. The time for rising in Ulster would have been, if ever, when oppression *first* made the risks of rebellion more bearable than the certainties attendant on submission: but that time was gone. Long endurance had made the Northerners callous—long waiting had made them weary, languid and heart-sick. Insurgency had lost that fresh vitality, that all-daring impulsiveness, which no possible quantity or quality of organisation can supply the place of. The Ulster patriots seem never to have taken into their account that *the government was organised*—organised far better than they were ever likely to be. Organisation and secrecy, with the *prestige* of legitimacy besides, are always on the side of a government; and the main strength of insurrection must ever be, not in any forced and artificial imitation of these—but in the irrepressible, incalculable and uncalculating energies of popular will and passion. Machinery is an excellent thing in its way; but it never yet made a revolution.

It is an instructive fact in the philosophy of politics, that the strength of the Irish Rebellion of 1798 was found where the politicians had never looked for rebellion at all—in one of the least prepared and organised counties of Ireland. While Ulster was still busy, in its seventh year of United Irish agitation, organising in committee-rooms, deputing, reporting, voting, resolving, and doubting after all whether it might not be as well "not to meet again and deceive the people any longer," WEXFORD was already in the field, taking the king's towns and keeping them, chasing the king's troops like hunted deer, and getting up a war which it took a dozen general officers and twenty thousand good British troops to put down. The history of this insurrection in the county of Wexford—unconnected, as it

* "Personal Narrative," p. 214.

was, with the plans and the organisation of the United Irishmen—irregular, impulsive, unpremeditated, yet quite overshadowing in extent and importance every thing that was done or attempted to be done in all the rest of Ireland together—presents matter of grave reflection to all governments, especially to all British governments. If Ireland in 1798 had had two Wexfords, there never would have been a Secret Committee reporting on the “well-timed measures adopted to make the rebellion explode.”

The county of Wexford had, previously to the year 1798, been, on the whole, one of the most tranquil and thriving in Ireland. There had been abundance of rancorous, intolerant Protestantism among its gentry; its representatives in parliament had been famous for the uniformity and vehemence of their opposition to each successive relaxation of the Popery laws; and in 1782, the county had earned a bad pre-eminence in bigotry by excluding Catholics from the ranks of its Volunteer corps. Still, the peaceful, industrious temper of the people had gone far to neutralise the mischief. Wexford had seen nothing as yet of Defenders or Orangemen; riots and disturbances were rare; capital executions few; Whiteboyism almost unknown. Land bore a higher value here than in most other parts of Ireland, and the peasantry enjoyed a degree of physical comfort not common in the counties of the South.* Apart from the strong Anti-Catholic politics of the Wexford gentry, this county was remarkably free from political agitation. Its inhabitants were a quiet, tractable, conservative sort of people, who kept themselves to themselves—shut up by sea and mountain in a corner of the island.† United Irish politics could never make much way in Wexford. An attempt had been made to organise the county,‡ but it was met with a general “apathy” which effectually discouraged the emissaries of the Union from further efforts. In proportion to its population, Wexford was the least United-Irish county in Ireland. It was unrepresented in the Leinster Provincial Committee, had no share whatever in their counsels, and remained quiet on the night of the 23rd of May. Wexford had never intended to rebel, never had a taste for rebellion—never would have rebelled, but for those horrible brutalities of military license which a Clare-and-Castlereagh Secret Committee impudently designated “well-timed measures.”

Early in the year 1798, attempts had been made on the part of the Protestant magistracy of Wexford, by means of the spy-and-informer system, to implicate the county in the United Irish conspiracy: but the informers they employed were of so infamous a character, that no jury could be found to credit their testimony. The cases broke down, and the spring assizes ended without a conviction. Wexford continued tolerably quiet down to the month of April; when Orangeism, pitch-caps, house-burnings, half-hangings, and whippings to extort confession, were all imported

* See Hay's "History of the Insurrection in the County of Wexford," pp. 12-14.

† Hay says, "The baronies of Forth and Bargo are occupied by the descendants of an English colony, who came over with Strongbow in the reign of Henry II. They have ever since, in the course of upwards of six hundred years, lived entirely, with little or no admixture, within themselves. Until of late years, it was a rare thing to find a man among them that had ever gone farther from home than Wexford. They have even preserved their language, probably without alteration or improvement."—P. 17.

‡ It was a dangerous experiment making people of this sort rebels.

‡ By William Putnam McCabe.—Madden, vol. i., p. 402.

together into that previously peaceful and tranquil district, by the NORTH CORK MILITIA, commanded by Lord Kingsborough.

"In this regiment," says Mr. Hay, "there were a great number of Orangemen, who were zealous in making proselytes and displaying their devices, having medals and orange ribbons triumphantly pendant from their bosoms. It is believed that, previous to this period, there were but few actual Orangemen in the county; but soon after, those whose principles inclined that way, finding themselves supported by the military, joined the association, and publicly avowed themselves, by assuming the devices of the fraternity.

"It is said that the North Cork regiment were also the inventors—but they certainly were the introducers—of pitch-cap torture into the county of Wexford. Any person having their hair cut short (and therefore called a *Croppy**, by which appellation the soldiery designated a United Irishman), on being pointed out by some loyal neighbour, was immediately seized and brought into a guard-house, where caps either of coarse linen or strong brown paper, besmeared inside with pitch, were always kept ready for service. The unfortunate victim had one of these, well heated, compressed on his head, and when judged of a proper degree of coolness, so that it could not be easily pulled off, the sufferer was turned out amidst the horrid acclamations of the merciless torturers, and to the view of vast numbers of people, who generally crowded about the guard-house door, attracted by the afflicted cries of the tormented. Many of those persecuted in this manner experienced additional anguish from the melted pitch trickling into their eyes. This afforded a rare addition of enjoyment to these keen sportsmen, who reiterated their horrid yells of exultation on the repetition of the several accidents to which their game was liable upon being turned out; for, in the confusion and hurry of escaping from the ferocious hands of these more than savage barbarians, the blinded victims frequently fell or inadvertently dashed their heads against the walls in their way. The pain of disengaging this pitched cap from the head must be next to intolerable. The hair was often torn out by the roots, and not unfrequently parts of the skin were so scalded or blistered as to adhere and come off along with it. The terror and dismay that these outrages occasioned are inconceivable. A serjeant of the North Cork, nicknamed *Tom the Devil*, was most ingenious in devising new modes of torture. Moistened gunpowder was frequently rubbed into the hair cut close, and then set on fire; some, while shearing for this purpose, had the tips of their ears snipt off; sometimes an entire ear, and often both ears were completely cut off; and many lost part of their noses during the like preparation. But, strange to tell, these atrocities were publicly practised without the least reserve in open day, and no magistrate or officer ever interfered, but shamefully connived at this extraordinary mode of quieting the people! * * * Females were also exposed to the grossest insults from these military ruffians. Many women had their petticoats, handkerchiefs, caps, ribbons, and all parts of their dress that exhibited a shade of green (considered the national

* The practice of cutting the hair short on the back of the head, at the time of initiation, was one of those puerile follies in use among the United Irishmen, which could answer no possible purpose but to attract attention and excite suspicion. Short hair was considered, in 1798, a *prima facie* evidence of treason; and numbers of persons lost their lives as rebels, against whom no other overt act could be alleged than their "croppism."

colour of Ireland), torn off, and their ears assailed by the most vile and indecent ribaldry."*

The result of these atrocities was such as very speedily to answer their design of getting up disturbances, or the semblance of disturbances, which "well-timed measures" might improve into rebellion. The first effect of the introduction of Orangeism into Wexford was *terror*. The people could not feel themselves safe in their own houses. Their fears became at length so great, that they "*forsook their houses in the night*, and slept (if under such circumstances they could sleep) in the ditches." But these nocturnal gatherings of trembling fugitives soon became councils of conspirators. The idea of resistance—collective, armed resistance—began to familiarise itself to these poor creatures' imaginations; and great numbers took the United Irish oath, in order to band themselves together more effectually in self-defence.

The magistracy had now a pretext for arming themselves with new powers: the North Cork Militia had got things ready for the Insurrection Act. On the 25th of April, twenty-seven magistrates met at Gorey, and resolved that the county should be forthwith *proclaimed*; which was done accordingly, on the 27th. From this period, the work of torture and terror went on further and faster than ever. Mr. Hay, a resident in Wexford, and an eye-witness of the facts which he narrates, says—

"The proclamation of the county having given greater scope to the ingenuity of magistrates to devise means of quelling all symptoms of rebellion, as well as of using every exertion to procure discoveries, they soon fell to burning of houses wherein pikes or other offensive weapons were discovered, no matter how brought there.† But they did not stop here; for the dwellings of suspected persons, and those from which any of the inhabitants were found to be absent at night, were also consumed. This circumstance of absence from the houses very generally prevailed through the county, although there were the strictest orders forbidding it. This was occasioned at first, as was before observed, from apprehension of the Orangemen; but afterwards proceeded from the actual experience of torture by the people from the yeomen and magistrates. Some, too, abandoned their homes for fear of being whipped, if, on being apprehended, confessions satisfactory to the magistrates could neither be given or extorted; and this infliction many persons seemed to fear more than death itself. Many unfortunate men who were taken in their own houses were strung up as it were to be hanged, but were let down now and then to try if strangulation would oblige them to become informers. After these and the like experiments, several persons languished for some time, and at length perished in consequence of them. Smiths and carpenters, whose assistance was considered indispensable in the fabrication of pikes, were pointed out, on evidence of their trades, as the first and fittest objects of torture. But the sagacity of some magistrates became at length so acute, from habit and

* "Insurrection in the County of Wexford," pp. 57-59.

† Probably in many cases *put there* for the uses of the finders. It is on judicial record that this was done in Tipperary. In that county, timber was cut and shaped into pike-handles by the members of a yeomanry corps, and by persons employed by them, which pike-handles they afterwards pretended to "discover," in consequence of secret information.—See the affidavits in the case of *Rex v. White and Goring* (Plowden, vol. ii., p. 815); to which affidavits the Court of King's Bench gave credence.

exercise, that they *discerned* a United Irishman, even at the first glance: and their zeal never suffered any person whom they deigned to honour with such distinction, to pass off without convincing proof of their attention."*

After detailing several instances of gross and iniquitous cruelty, Mr. Hay proceeds:—

"While the minds of the people were in this state of distraction and alarm, numbers condemned to transportation by the magistrates of other counties daily passed through the county of Wexford, on their way to Duncannon Fort. Groups of from twelve to fifteen car-loads at a time have gone through Ross alone. These terrifying examples added, if possible, to the apprehensions already entertained, and the precedent was soon after put in practice in the county of Wexford itself.

"Great as the atrocities already related may appear (and surely they are very deplorable), enormities still more shocking to humanity remained to be perpetrated. However grating to generous and benevolent feeling the sad detail must prove, imperious truth imposes the irksome necessity of proceeding to facts.

"Mr. HUNTER GOWAN had for many years distinguished himself by his activity in apprehending robbers, for which he was rewarded with a pension of £100 per annum; and it were much to be wished that every one who has obtained a pension had as well deserved it. Now exalted to the rank of magistrate, and promoted to be captain of a corps of yeomen, he was zealous in exertions to inspire the people about Gorey with dutiful submission to the magistracy, and a respectful awe of the yeomanry. On a public day in the week preceding the insurrection, the town of Gorey beheld the triumphal entry of Mr. Gowan at the head of his corps, with his sword drawn, and a human finger stuck on the point of it!

"With this trophy he marched into the town, parading up and down the streets several times, so that there was not a person in Gorey who did not witness this exhibition; while, in the meantime, the triumphant corps displayed all the devices of Orangemen. After the labour and fatigue of the day, Mr. Gowan and his men retired to a public house to refresh themselves, and, like true blades of game, their punch was stirred about with the finger that had graced their ovation, in imitation of keen fox-hunters, who whisk a bowl of punch with the brush of a fox before their boozing commences. This captain and magistrate afterwards went to the house of Mr. Jones, where his daughters were, and while taking a snack that was set before him, he bragged of having blooded his corps that day, and that they were as staunch bloodhounds as any in the world. The daughters begged of their father to shew them the cropy finger, which he deliberately took from his pocket and handed to them, Misses dandled it about with senseless exultation, at which a young lady in the room was so shocked that she turned about to a window, holding her hand to her face to avoid the horrid sight. Mr. Gowan perceiving this, took the finger from his daughters, and archly dropped it into the disgusted lady's bosom. She

* Hay, pp. 63-64.

Mr. Thomas Judkin Fitzgerald, the "flogging sheriff" of Tipperary, was particularly celebrated for this kind of discernment. "*I know by his face that he is a traitor—a Carmelite scoundrel,*" was his only charge against a young man of the name of Doyle, whom he had cruelly and indecently scourged in the streets of Clonmell.—See Plowden, *ubi sup.*

instantly fainted, and thus the scene ended. Mr. Gowan constantly boasted of this and other similar heroic actions, which he repeated in the presence of Brigade-Major Fitzgerald, on whom he had waited officially; but so far from meeting with his wonted applause, the Major obliged him instantly to leave the company.”*

We have no wish to write a Newgate Calendar: but these things belong to history. The nauseous atrocities above detailed were the public, daylight actions of public men, and went to make public events. Hunter Gowan and his “staunch blood-hounds,” and the Misses Gowan and the class of people they represented, and the state of society that tolerated such people, and the government that countenanced, patronised, and employed them: we have here the elements of all that was most violent and horrible in the Rebellion of 1798.

“Enniscorthy and its neighbourhood,” continues Mr. Hay, “were similarly protected by the activity of ARCHIBALD HAMILTON JACOB, aided by the yeomen cavalry thoroughly equipped for this kind of service. They scoured the country, having in their train a regular executioner, completely appointed with his implements, a hanging rope and a cat-o’-nine-tails. Many detections and consequent prosecutions of United Irishmen soon followed. A law had been recently enacted, that magistrates, upon their own authority, could sentence to transportation persons accused and convicted before them. Great numbers were accordingly taken up, prosecuted, and condemned. Some, however, appealed to an adjournment of a quarter-session held in Wexford, on the 23rd of May, in the county court-house; at which three and twenty magistrates from different parts of the county attended. Here all the private sentences were confirmed, except that of one man who was brought in on horseback that morning, carrying a pike with a handle of enormous length through Wexford town, on his way to the gaol. This exhibition procured him the reversion of his sentence, at the instance of the very magistrates who had condemned him. In the course of the trials on these appeals, in the public court-house of Wexford, Mr. A. H. Jacob appeared as evidence against the prisoners, and publicly avowed the happy discoveries he had made in consequence of inflicting the torture: many instances of whipping and strangulation he particularly detailed, with a degree of self-approbation and complacency that clearly demonstrated how highly he was pleased to rate the merits of his own great and loyal services!”†

After the public business was over, the magistrates retired to the grand-jury room, to concoct further measures for “tranquillising” the county. The result of their deliberations appeared the next day, in the following

“NOTICE—WE, the High Sheriff and Magistrates of the county of Wexford, assembled at sessions held at the county court-house in Wexford, this 23rd day of May, 1798, have received the most clear and unequivocal evidence, private as well as public, that the system and plans of those deluded persons who style themselves and are commonly known by the name of United Irishmen, have been generally adopted by the inhabitants of the several parishes in this county, who have provided themselves with pikes and other arms for the purpose of carrying their plans

* Insurrection in the County of Wexford, pp. 69-71.

† Ibid, p. 72.

"into execution; And whereas we have received information that the inhabitants of some parts of this county have within these few days past returned to their allegiance, surrendering their arms, and confessing the errors of their past misconduct: Now we, the High Sheriff and Magistrates, assembled as aforesaid, do give this public notice, that if, within the space of fourteen days from the date hereof, the inhabitants of the other parts of this county do not come in to some of the magistrates of this county, and surrender their arms or other offensive weapons, concealed or otherwise, and give such proof of their return to their allegiance as shall appear sufficient, an application will be made to government to *send the army at free-quarters* into such parishes as shall fail to comply, to enforce due obedience to this notice."

At the same time, they voted their unanimous "thanks to Archibald Hamilton Jacob, Esq., for his manly, spirited, active and efficacious exertions for the establishment and preservation of the public peace."

The fourteen-days' term specified in the magisterial notice seemed to hold out a promise that, during that interval at least, the work of cruelty and terrorism would be suspended, and that security would attend on submission. Such was not the intention of the ruling powers in Wexford. All over the county, the people came flocking in to the magistrates, to surrender their arms and take out protections: but it made no difference—the burnings, the whippings, the hangings and the half-hangings went on as before. It was at this time (says Hay) that

"Mr. Perry, of Inch, a Protestant gentleman, was seized on and brought a prisoner to Gorey, guarded by the North Cork Militia, one of whom, the noted sergeant nicknamed *Tom the Devil*, gave him woful experience of his ingenuity and adroitness at devising torment. As a specimen of his *savoir-faire*, he cut off the hair of his head very closely; cut the sign of the cross from the front to the back, and transversely from ear to ear, still closer; and probably a pitched cap not being in readiness, gunpowder was mixed through the hair, which was then set on fire, and the shocking process repeated until every atom of hair that remained could be easily pulled out by the roots; and still a burning candle was continually applied, until the entire was completely singed away, and the head left totally and miserably blistered! At Carnew, things were carried to still greater lengths; for, independent of burning, whipping, and torture in all shapes, on Friday, the 25th of May, twenty-eight prisoners were brought out of the place of confinement, and deliberately shot in a ball-alley by the yeomen and a party of the Antrim militia, the infernal deed being sanctioned by the presence of their officers! Many of the men thus inhumanly butchered had been confined on mere suspicion!!!"*

Even now the rebellion did not begin, notwithstanding the news that day from Kildare—a plain proof that rebellion had never been intended. These irritative and stimulant atrocities by no means produced at first what one might have supposed to be their most likely and natural effect. The people were paralysed rather than exasperated. They ran away and hid themselves; they came in and surrendered; they seemed willing to do anything, and bear anything, rather than rebel. Cloney says, with reference to this period—"No one slept in his own house; the very whistling

* "Insurrection in the County of Wexford," p. 76.

of the birds seemed to report the approach of an enemy. The remembrance of the wailings of the women, and the cries of the children, awake in my mind, even at this period, feelings of deep horror. Such was the state of things in my neighbourhood, yet not one act of hostility against the government had been even slightly indicated.* So late as Saturday, the 26th of May, the people continued crowding in to the magistrates, to surrender their arms and obtain protections. Mr. Hay, who spent this day at New-park, the seat of Mr. Edward Fitzgerald, a few miles from the county town, tells us that a magistrate of the name of Turner was there all day long, administering the oath of allegiance to vast numbers of people, receiving surrenders of arms, and giving certificates of protection. He gives the following account of the state of terror these poor creatures were in:—

“Among the great numbers assembled on this occasion were some men from the village of Ballaghkeen, who had the appearance of being more dead than alive, from the apprehensions they were under of having their houses burnt or themselves whipt, should they return home. These apprehensions had been excited to this degree, because that on the night of Thursday, the 24th, the Enniscorthy cavalry, conducted by Mr. Archibald Hamilton Jacob, had come to Ballaghkeen; but on hearing the approaching noise, the inhabitants ran out of their houses and fled into large brakes of furze, on a hill immediately above the village, from whence they could hear the cries of one of their neighbours who was dragged out of his house, tied up to a thorn tree, and while one yeoman continued flogging him, another was throwing water on his back. The groans of the unfortunate sufferer, from the stillness of the night, reverberated widely through the appalled neighbourhood; and the spot of execution these men represented to have appeared next morning ‘as if a pig had been killed there.’ After this transaction, Mr. Jacob went round to all the rest of the houses, and signified that if he should find the owners out of them on his next visit, he would burn them. These men, whose countenances exhibited signs of real terror, particularly from apprehensions of flogging, which they seemed to dread more than death itself, offered to surrender themselves prisoners to Mr. Turner, who did all in his power to allay their fears, offering to give them all certificates, the production of which to Mr. Jacob he was sure would afford them protection; but they still persisted in preferring to remain as prisoners with Mr. Turner, rather than to place any confidence in Mr. Jacob. Mr. Turner then gave them certificates, declaring their absence from home to be by his permission, to be left with their families, and told them they might come to his house if they pleased.”†

Human nature, especially Irish popish-peasant nature, will bear much—

* “A Personal Narrative of those Transactions in the County of Wexford in which the Author was engaged, during the awful period of 1798.” By Thomas Cloney.

Thomas Cloney, one of the thousands who *rebelled to save their lives*, was at this time a young man of three-and-twenty, a Catholic, residing at Moneyhore, three miles from Enniscorthy, with his father, a substantial and thriving farmer. He had never been a United Irishman, or a member of any political society. He eventually joined the insurgents (with whom he distinguished himself as a brave, able and humane officer), for the simplest of all possible reasons—because he “saw no second course for himself, or indeed for any Catholic in his part of the country, to pursue,” who did not wish to be burned out and shot, hanged, flogged, or pitch-capped. In Cloney’s case, as in very many others, rebellion turned out to be the prudent, as it was the honourable and manly course. Mr. Cloney is living still, a worthy member of the Loyal National Repeal Association.

† “Insurrection in the County of Wexford,” p. 78.

There was nothing these poor people held in more horror than the whippings. Mr.

but there is a limit to everything. On the evening of this same Saturday, the 26th of May, terror gave place to rage, and the rebellion began.

FATHER JOHN MURPHY, of Boolavogue Chapel, in the parish of Kilmormick, near Enniscorthy, was living quietly at home, doing what in him lay to keep the peace in his parish, and warn his parishioners against the wiles of agitators, conspirators, and United Irishmen—when his Saturday-evening's preparations for Whitsuntide mass and sermon were disturbed by the irruption of a troop of Orange yeomanry, who burned forthwith his chapel, his house, and some twenty farm-houses in the place. Father John Murphy was a quiet man, and a clergyman: but quiet men are dangerous when roused, and clergymen have their feelings as well as other people. Father John Murphy rebelled that moment, rose against these yeomen with a strong party of his parishioners, and two officers of the marauders were killed. It was no use preaching "peace, peace," after that. The Whitsuntide mass and sermon were left to shift for themselves; the priest and his flock, and a crowd of other fugitives and "disaffected persons" from the country round, assembled, and encamped for the night on Oulard Hill, about ten miles north of Wexford—and the Wexford Rebellion was begun.

Early on the morning of Whit-Sunday, the 27th, the news of the rebel gathering was brought into Wexford. A party of the Shelmaliere cavalry, commanded by Colonel Le Hunte, with upwards of a hundred of the North Cork Militia, immediately marched out to Oulard to attack the insurgents. The militia ascended the hill on the south side, while the cavalry went round to the left, to get behind and prevent a retreat. They did prevent a retreat. The insurgents were already in flight, when, finding their escape cut off, they rallied, made a desperate charge on their assailants, and piked the whole of them in a few minutes—the colonel, a serjeant and three privates only excepted. The Shelmaliere cavalry fled back to Wexford. Five killed and two wounded were the whole loss of the insurgents.

The rebellion now grew fast. Flushed with their cheap and easy victory, the popular force marched from Oulard northwards, gaining large accessions of strength every step of their way. They encamped that night on Carrigrew Hill, and re-commenced the war at seven o'clock on Monday morning. They first took possession of Camolin, a small town about six miles from Oulard, whose loyal inhabitants had taken refuge in Gorey. Thence they proceeded, two miles southward, to Ferns, found it evacuated by the loyalists, and pursued the latter a few miles further to Enniscorthy.

Gordon, then residing as a Protestant curate near Gorey, gives the following instance of this in his "History of the Rebellion":—

"On the morning of the 23rd of May, a labouring man, named Denis M'Daniel, came to my house with looks of the utmost consternation and dismay, and confessed to me that he had taken the United Irishman's oath, and had paid for a pike, with which he had not yet been furnished, nineteenpence-halfpenny, to one Kilty Smith, who had administered the oath to him and many others. While I sent for my eldest son, who was a lieutenant of yeomanry, to arrest Kilty, I exhorted M'Daniel to surrender himself to a magistrate and make his confession; but this he positively refused, saying that he should, in that case, be lashed to make him produce a pike which he had not, and to confess what he knew not. I then advised him, as the only alternative, to remain quietly at home, promising that if he should be arrested on the information of others, I would represent his case to the magistrates. He took my advice, but the fear of arrest and lashing had so taken possession of his thoughts, that he could neither eat nor sleep; and on the morning of the 25th he fell on his face and expired, in a little grove near my house."

By this time there were seven thousand of them : eight hundred had fire-arms, which they had seized at Camolin. About one o'clock they began their attack on Enniscorthy, a considerable town and very important military position, in the centre of the county. It was vigorously but ineffectually defended by a small garrison : the impetuosity, bravery and numbers of the insurgents carried everything before them. The royal cavalry twice charged the rebel pikemen, but could make no impression on their ranks ; and, after a hot fight of four hours, the garrison fled " in a piteous plight " to Wexford. The insurgents encamped for the night on VINEGAR HILL, an eminence overlooking and commanding Enniscorthy.* Being now in full military possession of that part of the county, they took the tone of command : they sent out scouring parties to bring in all the respectable persons they could find as recruits, with menaces of death in case of refusal. One of these recruits was Captain John Hay (brother to the historian) who had been an officer in the French service.

We must now return to Wexford. The ruling powers of that town and neighbourhood—little dreaming of the actual possibility of that " rebellion," the talk of which had hitherto been the glib and easy pretext for their own cruel and insolent tyranny—carried matters with a high hand almost to the last. On Saturday night and Sunday morning, they arrested and lodged in the town gaol three of the most respectable gentlemen of the

* This encampment on Vinegar Hill was kept up during the whole period of the rebellion, as the head-quarters of the popular army.

We may here subjoin a few particulars of the insurgents' mode of warfare. The favourite and usual popular weapon was the pike, of whose formidable capabilities we have already spoken. Cavalry they had none at this period, and of artillery only a few pieces of inferior calibre, ill-mounted on the common cars of the country, and ill-served. Their fire-arms were few (mostly those taken from the enemy), and generally did little execution in the unskilled hands that wielded them. Cloney says (" Personal Narrative," p. 47) :—" Many of those who became possessors of fire-arms by their courage, were ignorant of their use ; and never did children show more eagerness in examining their newly purchased toys, than did such men in firing with their recently-acquired instruments of death." The Shelmaliers marksmen—sharp-shooters from the barony of Shelmaliere, on the Wexford coast, where the people subsisted during the winter by shooting sea-fowl—were the only expert musketeers the insurgents had. Their great deficiency was in ammunition. Gunpowder was scarce, and most difficult to come by. Under the Gunpowder Act of 1793, the government had seized on all within their reach, and severe penalties visited the unauthorised possession of the commodity. Some of the more scientific of the insurgent leaders taught the people to manufacture for themselves ; but the quantity was small and the quality poor. Pebbles, and balls of hardened clay were a common substitute for bullets.

The rude encampments of the rebels were always fixed on hill-tops. Sometimes one or two tents, or other such covering, might be provided for the chiefs : the multitude either went home by night, or contented themselves with rugs or blankets. There was little discipline or order in the proceedings of the popular armies. Everything was managed on the voluntary principle : the soldiers came and went as they pleased, and in many places the camps were almost totally deserted at night. Their cooking was of the rudest description : but any cooking was a novelty to Irish peasants. The cattle were knocked down and slain, pieces of flesh cut off at random, without the nicety of previous flaying, and roasted or burned in the fire, hide and all. For saddles, when saddles were needed, a convenient substitute was found in *books*, which were placed open on the horses' backs, with ropes for girths and stirrups. The folios found in the plunder of gentlemen's houses were in great request for this purpose. This rude, gipsying mode of warfare was greatly favoured by an uninterrupted continuance of dry and warm weather, a circumstance of rare occurrence in Ireland. This they regarded as a special interposition of Providence in their favour ; and the popular faith was, that not a drop of rain would fall till Ireland was all their own.

county—BAGENAL BEAUCHAMP HARVEY, EDWARD FITZGERALD, and JOHN HENRY COLCLOUGH—guilty of no other crime than liberal political opinions.* When the fugitive military arrived from the rout at Oulard, the consternation was extreme. Dispatches were sent off to Duncannon Fort and Waterford, for reinforcements : and in the meantime the heroes of the North Cork Militia—with the cowardice and cruelty befitting that army, “formidable to every one but the enemy,” of which they were a worthy corps—proposed to avenge their fallen comrades by *murdering the prisoners*. Mr. Hay says :—

“Those of the North Cork Militia then in the town vowed vengeance against the prisoners confined in the gaol, particularly against Messrs. Harvey, Fitzgerald, and Colclough, so lately taken up; and so explicitly and without reserve were these intentions manifested, that I myself heard a sergeant and others of the regiment declare that they could not *die easy*, if they should not have the satisfaction of putting the prisoners in the gaol of Wexford to death, particularly the three gentlemen last mentioned. Nor was this monstrous design harboured only by the common soldiers; some of the officers declared the same intentions. I communicated all to the gaoler, who informed me that he had himself heard the guards on the gaol express their hostile intentions. He was so alarmed and apprehensive of their putting their threats into execution, that he contrived means to get them out, then locked the door, and determined to defend his charge at the risk of his life. He then, with a humanity and presence of mind that would have become a better station, communicated his apprehensions to all the prisoners, whom he advised to remain close in their cells, so as to avoid being shot in case of an actual attack. He armed the three gentlemen, and formed so judicious a plan of defence, that, in the event of being overpowered, their lives could not be had at a cheap rate. Of this scene I was myself an eye-witness, having permission of the high sheriff to pay every attention to my friend and relation, Mr. Fitzgerald. * * * A number of soldiers went round the gaol several times, as if to reconnoitre, and were overheard threatening the prisoners with certain destruction if they could but get in; and I verily believe that, had it not been for the indefatigable exertions of the gaoler, the prisoners would have been all massacred.”†

When the news from Oulard was followed up by intelligence that the rebels were in possession of Enniscorthy, matters looked more serious; and there was no time to be wasted on the amusement—otherwise lawful and laudable enough—of butchering prisoners in cold blood. Preparations were rapidly made for putting the town in a state of defence. Two hundred of the principal inhabitants were supplied with arms, and put on military duty. The prisoners were visited by the magistrates, and prevailed on to write to their tenantry and neighbours to dissuade them from joining the insurgents. Throughout the night of the 28th, and the following morning, the arrangements for defence went on with an activity which showed the estimate that was taken of the formidableness of the enemy. On the morning of Tuesday, the 29th, two hundred of the Donegal Militia

* Mr. Harvey had been busy, the whole of Saturday, in collecting arms from his tenantry and neighbours in the baronies of Forth and Bargo. He brought them in to Wexford, delivered them up to the authorities, and was thrown into gaol.

† “Insurrection in the County of Wexford,” pp. 85-86.

marched in from Duncannon Fort, with a promise from General Fawcett, who commanded there, to come in person with further reinforcements. The thatch was stripped off the houses, to prevent the town from being fired; and every boat in the harbour was in requisition to take the women and children on board ship. The old town walls (which were still standing in good preservation) were strongly guarded, the gateways barricaded and fortified, and patrols of cavalry constantly kept out reconnoitring. Meanwhile, the widows of the militiamen killed at Oulard went weeping and wailing about the town. In the course of the morning, the bodies of the slain were brought in for burial, which, as Mr. Hay says, "contributed not a little to dispirit the military in the town." The military in the town had a decided taste for that part of their profession which consisted in burning cabins, butchering prisoners, and whipping and pitch-capping coppers; but when it came to real bodily fighting, with the chance of being killed, it was another affair altogether—the ruffian collapsed into the poltroon.

Still, with all their preparations, the Wexford authorities did not like the aspect of things. They thought negotiating would be safer and more agreeable than fighting; and, for the first time in the history of Wexford Protestantism, they determined to "try conciliation." In this, the first hour of real danger they had ever known, these proud, hard and cruel men were not ashamed to invoke the liberal and Catholic gentry whom they had maligned and insulted, as intercessors for them with the peasantry whom they had flogged and tortured. The principal gentlemen of the town first applied to Mr. Hay—who, as a Catholic of liberal politics, might be presumed to have influence with the people—and besought him to go out to the insurgents and endeavour to induce them to disperse. Mr. Hay was perfectly willing to do this, though the service was one of no small peril, provided a magistrate, on whose honour he could rely to protect him from slanderous misconstruction, would go with him. But the magistrates, one and all, declined the enterprise. It was then considered that some of the prisoners might make acceptable and useful negotiators; and it was proposed, and eventually agreed on, that Messrs. Harvey, Fitzgerald, and Colclough should be admitted to bail, and that the two latter should go out to parley with the rebel army, Harvey remaining in prison as a hostage for their honourable return.*

This mission had results little contemplated by its authors. It strikingly shows the unpremeditated character of the Wexford insurrection, that, on the arrival of Fitzgerald and Colclough at Enniscorthy, at four o'clock in the afternoon, they found the insurgents *in the act of dispersing*. They had been debating (without a thought of Wexford) whether to attack Ross, or Gorey, or Newtown-Barry; but there was neither concert in their councils nor discipline in their ranks. Every man was anxious to go home, and see to the protection of his own house and family from the attacks of the Orangemen; and the rebel army had already begun disbanding itself. The rebellion, in fact, was over—if it had only been let alone. The embassy from Wexford made a difference.

* Hay says (p. 98):—"The prisoners were visited by the most respectable gentlemen in the town, several requesting me to accompany them to the prison for the purpose of introduction. Indeed, so marked was the attention paid to them on this occasion, that an indifferent spectator would be led to consider them *rather as the governors of the town than as prisoners.*"

"Most of the multitude," says Hay, "was dispersed, and on the way to their several homes, in all directions from Vinegar Hill, when some of them met Messrs. Fitzgerald and Colclough (whose arrests were publicly known) near the village of St. John's, and finding them liberated and sent out to them, they were immediately welcomed by a general shout, which, communicating from one to another like electricity, it was re-echoed all the way to Enniscorthy, and so on to the top of Vinegar Hill, and thence through all the country round. The reverberation of the shouts thus widely diffused arrested the attention of the astonished multitude, who instantly returned to discover the cause of such sudden exultation; so that when the deputed gentlemen arrived on Vinegar Hill, the camp, so deserted but a moment before, now became as thronged as ever." Their perplexed counsels were now suddenly enlightened, their divided forces combined, their fluctuating purposes fixed, their aimless energies concentrated on an object. The offer to parley betrayed, in a most unexpected way, the weakness of their enemies, gave them a new sense of their own strength and importance, lifted them in an instant to the height of the occasion—the war-cry was raised, "TO WEXFORD!—TO WEXFORD!" Fitzgerald was detained in the camp, and Colclough sent back to his employers to report progress. That night the insurgents encamped on the THREE ROCKS, an eminence at the extremity of the Forth mountains, about three miles from Wexford.

The next morning, (Wednesday, the 30th of May) the magistrates and military, on the faith of General Fawcett's promise to bring them a powerful succour from Duncannon Fort—which succour, it was calculated, must by that time be within view of the rebel camp—ventured on the bold measure of a sally; presuming that the insurgents would be too well occupied on the other side of their position to be able to offer any effectual resistance to them. But it happened, unfortunately for their plan, that General Fawcett and his troops were not on the way to their relief. By a stupid and unlucky blunder, the General and his troops had parted company the night before. The General had returned in great haste to Duncannon Fort; the troops had come unwittingly too near the Three Rocks, and been cut to pieces in a few minutes, with the exception of one ensign and sixteen privates, who were taken prisoners. Two pieces of artillery were the trophies of the popular victory. Of all this nothing was known to the Wexford magistrates and military, till it was too late. The garrison made their sally, and failed; a colonel of militia was killed, and the troops fled. On their return to Wexford a hasty council of war was held, and it was determined to evacuate the town.

The retreat of the garrison from Wexford* was marked by all the cowardice and cruelty which habitually characterised the worst army the British empire has ever seen. Poor Mr. Harvey had been dragged down by the heels out of a chimney in which he had taken refuge from the murderous threats of the Orange yeomanry, and had written to the insurgents, on the entreaty of the magistrates, to implore "Christian charity" for the lives and properties of the inhabitants. Deputies had been sent

* They were twelve hundred strong; enough to have defended the town, fortified as it was, against ten times their own number of assailants.—Hay, p. 99.

out to the camp with Harvey's note ; but the military could not wait for the return of the deputation—they had their own lives to save. No sooner had the deputies set out than " all the military corps, a part of one only excepted, made the best of their way out of the town," leaving the armed Catholic inhabitants on duty at their posts. These were " actually ignorant of the flight of the soldiery *until the latter had been miles out of the town.*"* Of the small remnant who were not so fortunate as to escape in time, some disguised themselves in female or other unmilitary attire, some placed themselves under the protection of Mr. Harvey. The valiant North Cork Militia retained to the last their instinct for mischief: on leaving the barracks they set them on fire. After this disgraceful abandonment of their post, the fugitive garrison made off to Duncannon Fort, committing the most abominable outrages by the way, burning peasants' cabins and Catholic chapels, and shooting all the poor creatures they could find, women and children not excepted.

The victorious and exulting insurgents, meanwhile, poured into the town by thousands ; released all the prisoners in the gaol ; chose Mr. Harvey to be their Commander-in-Chief ; pillaged the houses of those who refused to give them refreshment and accommodation ; sent parties out in boats, to get all the arms, ammunition, and fugitives they could find on board the ships in the harbour ; and piked two of their tyrants and oppressors. But they did not sack the town ; they did not burn the Protestant church ; they did not murder their prisoners ; they did not kill women and children ; they had not one pitch-cap in all their military stores. The night of the 30th was " remarkably quiet, considering all that had happened ;" and the next day the victorious army was prevailed on by the inhabitants to retire peaceably from the town. They afterwards separated into two divisions, one of which marched westward to Taghmon, and the other northward in the direction of Gorey. A few days afterwards (4th of June) the latter division of the insurgent forces, by a bold and rapid movement, gained a decisive victory over the royal troops near Gorey, which placed them in possession of that town. The whole county of Wexford, with the exception of New Ross, Newtown-Barry, and Duncannon Fort, was now in the hands of the people.

Mr. Hay gives a very minute and curious account of the internal state of Wexford under the revolutionary *régime* : which, as indicative on a small scale of what would have taken place over the greater part of Ireland in the event of the general success of the rebellion, possesses considerable interest and value.

The insurgents, having complete and undisturbed possession both of town and country, soon proceeded to form a sort of government. Captain MATTHEW KEUGH, an officer in his Majesty's army, who had risen from the ranks by merit, and who had also distinguished himself as an active and upright magistrate for the county until (in 1796) the Lord Chancellor dismissed him for his liberal politics, was elected by acclamation governor and military commander of the town, which was divided into wards, each of which had its company of guards armed with guns and pikes. There was a regular parade, morning and evening, on the Custom-House Quay ;

* Hay, p. 109.

guards were posted and relieved, and pass-words and counter-signs regularly given out. At the commencement of the revolution, the town had suffered a good deal from plunder, some of the insurgents having remained after the withdrawal of the main body, and assumed to themselves, under the title of commissaries, the power of levying contributions at discretion for the supply of the camps. This nuisance was promptly abated. In order to prevent the waste and oppression consequent on this mode of raising the supplies, the inhabitants took the duty on themselves, and appointed a committee of twelve to see to the equal apportionment of the burden, and the faithful application of the contributions. Of the plunder taken by the insurgents on entering the town, a large part was subsequently restored, in obedience to a public notice from the new authorities that the discovery of property in any other than the lawful owner's hands would be attended with severe punishment. The court-house was the depository of goods so returned, which the owners recovered on making their claims.

In regard to economy and finance, the condition of revolutionised Wexford nearly approached to what is called the "state of nature." Money was rarely to be seen, except in the shape of bank-notes; in which shape it had ceased to possess any money value. "Great quantities of them were inconsiderately destroyed—some in lighting tobacco-pipes, and others used as wadding for fire-locks." Nothing passed in the market except specie, the possession of which few persons appeared willing to own. "But it must be mentioned that indeed the necessity of purchasing at market was in a great measure superseded; for, among the various duties of the committee, one was that of supplying every person in town with provisions. On application to them, every house was furnished with a ticket specifying the number of inhabitants, and all persons, even the wives and families of those considered the greatest enemies of the people, were indiscriminately included; and every person sent with a ticket to the public stores appointed for that purpose, received a proportionate quantity of meat, potatoes, and other necessaries free of any expense."

The military and naval departments of the executive government were conducted with vigour and efficiency. In addition to the arrangements made for the internal security and quiet of the town, a pretty complete military organisation was adopted in the country round. Each parish had its division of militia, electing its own officers. All persons capable of bearing arms were required, upon occasion, to attend the camps, on foot or horseback, with pike or gun, according to their means. All the smiths' forges, both in town and country, were kept at full work fabricating pike-blades; and timber fit for handles was cut down wherever it was to be found. The ornamental was cultivated as well as the useful. The new levies "decorated themselves in the most fantastical manner with feathers, tippets, handkerchiefs, and all the showy parts of ladies' apparel. Green was the most favourite and predominant colour; but on failure of this, decorations of almost any other colour were substituted. And as to their flags or ensigns, they were also generally green or of a greenish hue; but, on account of a deficiency in this respect, they displayed banners of all colours *except orange*, to which the people showed the most unalterable dislike, aversion, and antipathy; even blue, black, red, and yellow were remarked among their banners. Many damsels made an offering of their coloured petticoats

for the public service; and, to make these gifts the more acceptable, they usually decorated them according to their different fancies.”*

The entrance of the harbour was guarded with three pieces of cannon, mounted at the Fort of Roslare, to prevent the enemy from approaching by sea; and, for further security, four old sloops were kept ready to be scuttled and sunk at a moment's notice, to render the harbour inaccessible to ships of war. Four oyster boats were fitted out in the harbour, armed, and manned with five-and-twenty men each, to cruise outside the bay; and these, from time to time, made very useful and seasonable seizures of small coasting vessels, laden with oats, potatoes, and other provisions. On the fourth day of the insurgents' occupation of the town (2nd June) this naval activity and vigilance found its reward in one of the most important acquisitions effected by the people during the whole campaign—the capture, namely, of LORD KINGSBOROUGH, Colonel of the North Cork Militia, with two of his officers. His lordship, ignorant or incredulous of recent events, was proceeding by water from Arklow to Wexford, for the purpose of joining his regiment. His boat was hailed and taken by one of the armed oyster vessels, and the passengers were brought prisoners into Wexford. This capture became, in the event, the salvation of the town from the worst horrors of war.

The new order of things was marked by a vast number of extraordinarily sudden *religious conversions*, although (the fact is honourable to the people and their clergy) it does not appear that such conversions were at all necessary for the personal safety of the neophytes. The war *was not a religious war*, though the Orange bigots and tyrants had done their worst to make it such. During the whole Wexford insurrection, only one Protestant church was destroyed (notwithstanding repeated and continual attacks by the military on the Catholic chapels), and the town church of Wexford sustained no other indignity than the cowardly absenteeism and apostacy of its own congregation. But the Protestant gentlemen and ladies of Wexford could not understand this; they determined that at any rate they would err on the safe side, and lost no time in giving in their adhesion to the new Popish ascendancy that was to be. Broad and strong, if not deep, was the tide of proselytism which then set in towards the “damnable and idolatrous” ancient faith of Christendom. The Catholic chapels were crowded as they never had been crowded before; and the proselytes—as is the way with proselytes—were many degrees more zealous than the old-established believers.† Hosts of converts came flocking in to the priests for baptism, to an extent which sadly embarrassed those reverend and excellent persons. To give the sacrament to such hypocrites would be pro-

* Mr. Hay adds—“Several loyal ladies, too, both in town and country, displayed their taste in richly and fancifully ornamenting ensigns, to ingratiate themselves with the people; but many of them not having time to perfect their *chef d'œuvres* before the insurrection was suppressed, have since thought it prudent, I suppose, to destroy these and the like specimens of elegant accomplishment, at which I had opportunities of observing them earnestly employed during the short-lived period of popular triumph.”

† “The epithet of *craw-thumper*, opprobriously applied to Catholics for contritely striking their breasts at their devotions, was never more strongly exemplified than by these converts. Catholics strike their breasts gently on certain occasions, and with the right hand alone; but Protestants who attended at mass in these times generally continued to strike themselves vehemently with both hands almost during the whole service.”—Hay, p. 144.

faning it: to withhold it was to leave the poor cowardly creatures in fear for their lives. At first they tried to evade the application, on the ground that the Church does not deem it necessary to re-baptise Christians of other denominations, who have already received the rite in due form, even at heretical hands. But the zeal of the converts was not to be put off so. It was discovered that the Church might, and sometimes did, re-baptise *conditionally*, by way of rectifying any error or supplying any deficiency in the previous administration of the sacrament; and so *conditional baptism* became the order of the day. "A curious circumstance," says our historian, "occurred in Wexford at this time, which eventually produced a great number of conditional baptisms. A young lady, who on first application failed of persuading a Catholic priest to confer on her the favour of baptism, had the diligence and address afterwards to discover that the Protestant minister who had undertaken to perform that ceremony in her infancy had only filliped or sprinkled the water at her with his finger, and so it was within the limits of probability that a drop might not have reached her head so as to form an ablution. Being very ingenious and persevering in her arguments, so as to appear capable of puzzling the nicest casuist, she at last made out her own a doubtful case, and was accordingly quieted by conditional baptism. When the particulars of this transaction got abroad, the solicitations to the Catholic clergy for the boon of conditional baptism became considerably more frequent, the applicants quoting this recent precedent, and adducing the hearsay evidence and far-fetched recollection of grandmothers, grand-aunts, and other grave and venerated relatives, with a long train of minute circumstances, to prove a similarity of cases, and claiming on this account an equal consideration." So much for Irish Protestantism, after a century of penal code.

The great subject of anxiety, during the occupation of Wexford by the people, was the personal safety of the prisoners, who were in almost constant peril from the passions of a mob of exasperated fugitives and unattached camp-followers. Yet on the whole, and until they were driven absolutely frantic by the savage brutalities of their enemies, the people behaved well—better, immeasurably, than their oppressors had done, and were doing, elsewhere. Of the "Wexford Bridge Massacre" we shall speak in its place; but we may note here that, during the first fortnight after the sudden and startling success of the popular arms, the efforts of the principal Catholic inhabitants and their clergy (who, with scarcely an exception, behaved admirably from first to last) were generally successful in restraining the people from bloody reprisals on their enemies. The effort was often difficult—sometimes perilous—but usually successful. Lord Kingsborough, Colonel of the abhorred North Cork Militia, reputed to be the inventor of the pitch-cap, and known for a merciless flagellant, though often menaced, had not a hair of his head hurt during nearly three weeks that he was a prisoner in the hands of the people.

On the evening of the 4th of June, the western division of the popular army, led by their Commander-in-Chief, Mr. Harvey, encamped on Corbet Hill, within a mile of the town of New Ross, which was strongly garrisoned by twelve hundred men, besides yeomanry, under the command of General Johnson. They determined to attack the town the next morning. The enterprise was well deserving of their utmost efforts. A more important place there was not in all the county; its possession would open

a communication for them with Waterford, Tipperary, and Kilkenny—and all Munster would be in arms within a week.

At break of day on the 5th, Mr. Harvey dispatched an officer to the enemy's lines, with a flag of truce and the following summons to the commander of the garrison to surrender :—

“SIR—As a friend to humanity, I request you will surrender the town of Ross to the Wexford forces now assembled against that town. Your resistance will but provoke rapine and plunder, to the ruin of the most innocent. Flushed with victory, the Wexford forces, now innumerable and irresistible, will not be controlled if they meet with any resistance. To prevent, therefore, the total ruin of all property in the town, I urge you to a speedy surrender, which you will be forced to do in a few hours with loss and bloodshed, as you are surrounded on all sides. Your answer is required in four hours. Mr. Furlong carries this letter, and will bring the answer.

“I am, sir, &c. &c.,

“B. B. HARVEY.

“Camp at Corbet Hill, half past three o'clock, morning,

“June 5th, 1798.”

Mr. Furlong was shot dead, the moment he and his flag of truce approached the place.

This atrocious act was witnessed by the division of the popular army encamped on the side of the hill towards the town. They were instantly ungovernable with rage. Disregarding the orders of their officers and the plan of their general for a simultaneous attack on the town at three different points (in which their great superiority of numbers would have come into full play), they rushed down headlong on the enemy, without waiting till the other two divisions of their force were ready for action. The onset was tremendous—everything gave way before them. In a moment they dislodged the outer lines of the royalists, burst through horse, foot, and artillery, and drove the broken and disordered ranks into the town. There they followed up their success “hot foot,” pressed the enemy from post to post, and from street to street through the town, and hunted them over the wooden bridge on the Barrow into the county of Kilkenny. The town was their own, and with it an opening into Munster, where their ranks would be recruited by myriads—if they could but have kept themselves sober.

But this was precisely the one thing which Irishmen in those days could not do. They were no sooner masters of the town than all discipline was at an end. The exhortations of their leaders to pursue and complete their victory were unheeded—they began plundering and drinking, without limit and without control. Meanwhile, the royal forces, finding themselves not pursued, slackened in their retreat, halted, rallied, and re-entered the town, eager to redeem their lost military honour. The feeble efforts of intoxicated men could make but an ineffectual resistance: the rebels fled to their camp, such of them as were capable of the exertion. Even yet the battle was not over. At this crisis, a Wexford youth of thirteen, of the name of Lett, who had stolen away from his mother to join Harvey's army on the march to Corbet Hill, snatched up a standard, and calling out “Follow me who dare!” rushed down the hill.* Two or three thousand pikemen, at once sobered by their recent panic and exasperated by its consequences, rapidly

* Barrington's “Historic Memoirs,” vol. ii., p. 274.

followed him. In an instant Lett was at the gate, and headed the pikemen in a furious attack on the fatigued and astonished garrison.

The conflict was now terrific. The royal artillery, which was excellently well served, made fearful havoc in the rebel ranks; but the dauntless men of Wexford charged home to the very cannons' mouths, piked the cannoniers, and bore off the guns in triumph. A second time were the royal troops routed from the town. And a second time did the triumphant assailants commit the astounding folly for which they had paid so dearly already. They began plundering and drinking as madly as before. The garrison again rallied, and returned to the scene of action. By this time the town was on fire in several places, and the contending armies fought hand to hand and foot to foot, amid the blaze and crackle of the conflagration. The conflict long continued doubtful; but discipline, sobriety, and excellent light artillery eventually overbore the reckless impetuosity of drunkenness and despair. At two in the afternoon, the Wexford army finally retreated from the post which they had twice won by hard fighting, and twice lost by hard drinking, leaving the royalists masters of the town, and some hundred houses in flames. They encamped for the night on Carrick-Byrne Rock, a hill about five miles east of Ross.*

The whole horrors of war followed, as usual, the victory of the king's troops. To the insurgent stragglers found in the re-captured town no quarter was given; and numbers of the inhabitants, whom the burning of their houses had driven out into the streets, were shot and bayoneted without mercy. Not a man escaped the rage of the soldiery who was not in military uniform. The work of blood and fire went on again the next day. Houses crowded with defenceless fugitives were set on fire, and guarded while burning, that none of the inmates might escape. "Some of these," says Hay, were "so thronged that the corpses of the suffocated within them could not fall to the ground, but continued crowded together in an

* In Ireland, even, civil war has comedy in it side by side with tragedy. Thomas Cloney, who was present at this engagement of New Ross, mentions, as "one of the curious movements of the day," that

"About half a dozen respectable persons, of that class termed middlemen, and jolly old toppers, who were at all times fitter to be counted among the votaries of Bacchus than those of Mars, early in the day had a cask of port wine conveyed down from Corbet Hill to a well-protected spot under the shelter of a very high ditch, and within a very short distance of the town. Here they commenced operations with great zeal and ardour. After taking a few bumpers out of wooden noggins (the vessels generally used by our peasantry), they occasionally advanced in warlike array to the Three-Bullet Gate, first ascertaining that the combat was going on at a good distance; and here they inquired, with gravity and becoming authority, 'How the day was going?' Evincing their zeal by asking '*how goes the day, boys?*' they regularly returned to the wine-cask with seeming indifference to the fate of Ireland, now in the balance; for it must be allowed that on our success or failure that day the future connexion of this country with England in a great degree depended. If we had succeeded, the way was open to Waterford and Duncannon Fort; both would have been hastily evacuated, and the province of Munster at once in arms.—"Personal Narrative," p. 41.

The whole army, up to the commander-in-chief, seems to have carried joviality beyond the limits of prudence and military discipline. The night before, Mr. Harvey and his principal officers had taken up their quarters at the house of Corbet Hill, where, says Hay, "being regaled with an excellent supper and exquisite wines, they were so well pleased with their cheer, and so far forgot their prudence as commanders, that they had scarcely time to fall asleep since the moment of their retirement, until they were roused by the orders they had given in their sober moments to commence the attack at the break of day."

upright posture until they were taken out to be interred." The same historian adds, that *officers* "were not only present, but promoted and encouraged these deeds of dreadful enormity."

In the battle of New Ross, scarcely a third part of the Corbet Hill army had been actually engaged. While the first division, too impetuous to wait for the word of military command, rushed wildly on the enemy, and carried slaughter and dismay through their ranks, the rest of the insurgents—seized, together with their leaders, with one of those unexplained and inexplicable panics of not unfrequent occurrence in this war—were already flying in all directions to their several homes, and bearing with them as they went the tidings of a total defeat. It was on this occasion, by a party of these runaways, that one of those base and ferocious acts of cruelty was perpetrated, by which the rebels occasionally lowered themselves nearly to the same level of cowardly ruffianism with their enemies. At the village of SCULLABOGUE, about five miles from Ross, was a barn recently used by the insurgents as a gaol, and at that time crowded with prisoners. To this Scullabogue barn the fugitives from Corbet Hill (having overpowered the guards, who resisted as long as they could) set fire, and burned every human creature confined within its walls. The number of victims has been variously stated at from eighty to nearly two hundred—the former being probably the nearest to the truth. It was a wicked, savage thing to do: but the king's troops, and the king's officers and magistrates did, or caused and suffered to be done, as bad, and worse things, every day. Pitch-cap and triangle tortures, half-hangings, picketings, house-burnings, free-quarters, peasant-shootings by the wayside, wholesale military butcheries—that these things, going on for weeks and months together, should produce at last a Scullabogue-barn massacre, is horrible, certainly, but scarcely marvellous. Most things that are done in this world, good and bad, have seed in them, and yield fruit after their kind. Nay, do not the very laws of "civilised warfare" recognise a legality and morality in *reprisals*? It is but fair to add, that when the army from New Ross reached their encampment at Carrick-Byrne that evening, and became acquainted with this barbarous business, they loudly expressed their abhorrence of it. Every attempt was made by Harvey to discover its perpetrators, but in vain.* He immediately issued a proclamation, concluding in these terms:—

"Any person or persons who shall take upon them to kill or murder
"any person or prisoners, burn any house, or commit any plunder, without
"special written orders from the Commander-in-Chief, shall suffer death.

"B. B. HARVEY, Commander-in-Chief."

This part of the transaction was certainly not imitated, from the proceedings of the king's troops, officers, and magistrates.†

* Taylor, the ascendancy historian, says "He turned from the scene with horror and wrung his hands, and said to those about him, 'Innocent people were burned there as ever were born; your conquests for liberty are at an end.' He said to a friend he fell in with, with respect to his own situation, 'I see now the folly of embarking in this business with these people: if they succeed, I shall be murdered by them; if they are defeated, I shall be hanged.'"

† The following specimen, likewise, of a rebel proclamation may bear a comparison, in point of temper and humanity, with the most decorous of those issued by the constituted authorities:—

"At this eventful period all Europe must admire, and posterity will read with astonishment, the heroic acts achieved by a people strangers to military tactics, and having

The repulse which the insurgents sustained at New Ross scarcely amounted to a defeat; nor was the successful defence of that town by the royalists followed by the usual results of victory. The British troops maintained their ground, but they did no more. The assailants were allowed to retreat unmolested; and so little apprehensive were the latter of annoyance from the New Ross garrison, that they shortly afterwards formed an encampment on Lacken Hill, only two miles from that place. There, and in their other camps, the people actively recruited their forces for new efforts. Mr. Harvey was so bitterly blamed (it does not appear with justice) for the event of the attack on New Ross, that he resigned his command and returned to Wexford.* His successor was the Reverend PHILIP ROCHE, a Catholic priest, a man abundantly gifted by nature with all the qualities that the post required—of intrepid personal courage, indomitable firmness, a quick and true military eye, immense physical strength and power of enduring privation and fatigue, great tact for managing the rude masses he had to rule, and a generous, humane heart with it all.

The efforts of the insurgents were now directed northward. The county (with the exceptions already noted) was all their own. General Fawcett was shut up in Duncannon Fort, and evinced no disposition to leave it; Philip Roche and the Lacken-Hill camp kept guard over General

few professional commanders. But what power can resist men fighting for liberty? In the moment of triumph, my countrymen, *let not your victories be tarnished with any wanton act of cruelty.* Many of those unfortunate men now in prison were not your enemies from principle; most of them, compelled by necessity, were obliged to oppose you. * * * *To promote a union of brotherhood and affection among our countrymen of all religious persuasions has been our principal object.* We have sworn in the most solemn manner—we have associated for this laudable purpose, and no power on earth shall shake our resolution.

"Wexford, June 7, 1798."

"EDWARD ROCHE.

* Barrington, who knew Harvey well, speaks of him (perhaps too contemptuously) as altogether unfit for the office of a rebel generalissimo. "His figure was diminutive, weak, and meagre, his voice tremulous, his dress squalid, his mind as feeble as his body, and as undecided as his stumbling movements. As an officer he had neither skill, system, nor energy. He was a Protestant barrister of fortune, good tempered, and of good private character, and was selected from being lord of Bargy Castle, and of considerable demesnes in the county of Wexford. Of personal courage he had sufficient, but of that heroic bravery which urges men to military action he was altogether unsusceptible. His wandering eye could fix on nothing. His wretched mind shrank within itself from the responsibility he had encountered."—"Historic Memoirs."

On returning to Wexford, Harvey took the post of president of the revolutionary committee for the government of the town. The difficulties and perils of his position are feelingly described in the following letter to a Mr. Glascott, written at this time:—

"DEAR SIR—I received your letter, but what to do for you I know not. I from my heart wish to protect all property—I can scarce protect myself; and, indeed, my situation is much to be pitied, and distressing to myself. I took my present situation in hopes of doing good and preventing mischief; my trust is in Providence. I acted always an honest, disinterested part, and had my advice been taken by those in power, the present mischief would never have arisen. If I can retire to a private station again, I will immediately. Mr. Tottenham's refusing to speak to the gentleman I sent to Ross, who was madly shot by the soldiers, was very unfortunate; it has set the people mad with rage, and there is no restraining them. The person I sent in had private instructions to propose a reconciliation, but God knows where this business will end; but, end how it will, the good men of both parties will be inevitably ruined.

"I am, with respect, yours,

"B. B. HARVEY."

See Madden, vol. i., p. 424.

Johnson and the garrison of New Ross, who were by no means inclined to recommence hostilities; and the powerful central camp of Vinegar Hill was a sufficient check on the movements of the royal troops in Newtown-Barry. The town of Wexford needed no defence, but only a good civil police. Accordingly, the popular leaders felt themselves free to adopt a wider range of military operations, of which the camp at Gorey, in the north of the county, was to be the centre. Their object was a bold one—the boldest and most important, by far, that had yet been contemplated. It was nothing less than to take the town of Arklow, in the county of Wicklow, form a junction with their friends in Wicklow, *and march on Dublin*. Arklow, the only place of any strength between them and the metropolis, seemed to offer itself as an easy conquest. The garrison were under a thousand, mostly irregulars: an old dilapidated barrack was their only fortification, four pieces of artillery were their only ordnance, and a party of Ancient Britons and a few yeomen their only cavalry. The popular army by this time was thirty thousand strong; and Wicklow had thousands more, ready to reinforce them. Fortunately for the government, warning was received in time to arrest this most formidable movement; the biographer of Grattan informs us by what means:—

“Two of the chiefs had rode early one morning to a respectable and wealthy farmer in the county of Wexford, in order to induce him to join them. During their conversation they disclosed their plan of advance along the coast of Dublin. Except at Arklow, there was scarce any stronghold on the line; the way lay open along the sea, and the march upon Dublin would have been easily accomplished, as the military were mostly in a distant part of the country, and the insurgent force coming from Wexford exceeded 30,000 men. The brother of the person from whom I got the anecdote, happening to be present, concealed himself in the farmer’s house, through fear of detection, and overheard the conversation. On the departure of the chiefs and their party, he wrote out a statement of the occurrence, secured it inside his shoe, and proceeded with every expedition across the country, till he delivered it to the next military commander. Upon the receipt of this intelligence in Dublin, every possible exertion was made, and every sort of soldier, on every sort of vehicle, was dispatched from the metropolis.”*

The reinforcements arrived in time. When the Wexford forces marched from Gorey to the attack (9th of June), they found Arklow powerfully garrisoned by sixteen hundred effective men, well prepared and well posted, in high spirits and perfectly fresh for action, under the command of General Needham. The engagement that ensued was one of the most regular of the whole campaign. The insurgents had nearly as many firearms as the royalists, though they were poor, as usual, in ammunition, and had only some small pieces of artillery. The battle-field was a plain on the south side of the town, where the British infantry were strongly posted, with two cannon at each wing. The rebel musketeers were drawn up exactly parallel with the enemy, defended by a low hedge in front. Their thousands of pikemen were stationed on an eminence a few hundred yards distant, ready to rush down on the royal forces and exterminate them on

* “Life of Grattan,” by his Son, vol. iv., p. 395.

the first sign of their giving way. The battle began as regularly as between two disciplined armies. An unintermitted fire was kept up for some hours on both sides, but with little execution on either: the insurgents had not yet learned to aim well, and they were, on their side, protected by the hedge. At length they made one of their vigorous onsets, drove in the enemy's outposts, pushed some luckless yeomanry cavalry into the river, dismounted one of the guns, and killed the gunner. The British officers were alarmed. If the rebels' ammunition lasted, and the pikemen charged, they could not keep the field. General Needham and most of the officers began to think of a retreat; but Colonel Skerrit, of the Dumbarton Fencibles, the second in command, positively refused to retire. Victory was dubious, but flight would be instant and certain destruction: a rush of the pikemen would annihilate the whole of them, and quarter was out of the question on either side. The ammunition of the royal army began to fail. But "fortunately," says Sir Jonah Barrington—whether fortunately, or unfortunately, the present historian leaves an open question—"that of the rebels was first exhausted." Nothing now remained but to charge with the pike. The charge was gallantly led by the Reverend MICHAEL MURPHY,* in a determined effort to gain the interior of the town. The fate of the day still wavered, when Murphy fell by a cannon shot in the front of his line. The assailants now retreated, but without precipitation, and the garrison had no desire to pursue them. The latter retired to their barracks, and the insurgents to their camp at Gorey.

"Thus ended," says Barrington, "a battle by no means the most sanguinary, but certainly one of the most important of the rebellion. Had the rebels succeeded, they would have been reinforced, every mile of their march to Dublin, by the disaffected population of Wexford and Wicklow. Kildare, Meath, and Westmeath were in arms, and the capital itself had thirty thousand organised rebels within its walls. * * * * At a very moderate computation, there were in Wexford and Wicklow at least fifty thousand effective insurgents, either under arms or prepared to take arms had their measures continued to be successful."†

The march on Dublin was prevented, and the growth of the rebellion checked; but that was all. The battle of Arklow, like that of New Ross, was essentially and practically a drawn battle—with no other result than the maintenance of the *status in quo*. The Wexford forces kept their camps, and the government forces kept their two or three garrison towns. A savage partisan warfare ensued; plundering and burning went on in all directions; all stragglers were shot or piked; and the most ferocious cruelties were practised on both sides: but each party seemed afraid of the

* Father Michael Murphy was another of those Catholic clergymen whom Orangeism turned into rebel generals. His chapel was wrecked, his person threatened, and he rebelled to save his life. Both John and Michael Murphy had previously, says Hay, been "remarkable for their exhortations and exertions against the system of United Irishmen."

The Protestant clergyman, Mr. Gordon, says, in his "History of the Rebellion," that after the battle of Arklow some soldiers of the regiment of Ancient Britons "cut open the dead body of Father Michael Murphy, took out his heart, roasted his body, and oiled their boots with the grease which dripped from it."

† "Historic Memoirs," vol. ii., p. 271.

other, and several days elapsed without any engagement of consequence.* It now became evident to the government that the rebellion could be crushed only by an overwhelming force of the best troops they had, concentrated at once on the very heart of the insurgents' power. This was the camp on VINEGAR HILL, which the people had carefully maintained in a permanent state of defence ever since their conquest of Enniscorthy, on the 28th of May. It was the largest encampment they had in the county; its central position rendered it of peculiar importance; and particular care was taken to keep it always provided with an ample force, which the British commanders had not on any occasion ventured to attack. On Vinegar Hill, accordingly, the government troops were now gradually concentrated. From the 18th to the 20th of June, the preparations went rapidly on for a combined assault on this important post. General Dundas marched to its vicinity from Baltinglass, in Wicklow; General Loftus, from Tullow, in Carlow; General Needham, from Arklow; Generals Johnson and Eustace, from New Ross; and General Sir James Duff, from Newtown-Barry; committing the customary burnings, plunderings, and devastations by the way, but carefully avoiding at the same time any serious engagement with parties of the insurgents. Twenty thousand men, amply equipped and furnished, with a large train of artillery, and GENERAL LAKE for Commander-in-Chief, were the force destined to surround the encampment of Vinegar Hill and the town of Enniscorthy, and finish the war at a blow.

The Wexford insurgents now, for the first time since their early successes, had to act on the defensive. Every effort was made by them to strengthen their position. On the 19th, General EDWARD ROCHE (a brother of Philip Roche) went from Vinegar Hill to Wexford to obtain reinforcements; and on the same day his brother came in from the Three Rocks, to recruit and supply that camp. The town was in a dreadful state of terror and excitement. Crowds of exasperated and horrified fugitives from all parts of the county pressed in every hour, reporting the cruelties and devastations committed by the several divisions of the British troops on their march, of which the blazing tokens were already visible from the Three-Rocks camp. "The general conflagration," says Hay, "was as progressive as the march of the troops." English ships of war likewise were seen off the coast; several gun-boats blockaded the harbour; the fate of Wexford was plainly near its crisis. The populace, irritated at the supineness of the inhabitants, who had never yet left their homes nor seen a battle, vowed the destruction of the town, unless all its armed men repaired forthwith to the camps, to bear a part in the common cause.

Early on the morning of the 20th, the drum beat to arms; and all the armed inhabitants of Wexford marched out to the Three Rocks, except the guards appointed to protect the gaol, then crowded with prisoners: except, likewise, a certain CAPTAIN DIXON, master of a Wexford trading vessel,

* "While the one party was burning and destroying what they considered enemy's property in one quarter, the other, actuated by revenge, was committing like devastation in another; and it would seem, as if by pre-concertion, that both moved in different directions on every particular day of excursion; so that the only warfare between them was an apparent strife who should cause the greatest desolation, or who should appear most eager to destroy what was spared by the other, so that the state of the country was truly lamentable."—Hay, p. 186.

and some three or four score of drunken ruffians who regarded him as their leader. This man Dixon, of insolent manners and ferocious character, had already committed one murder, and had occasioned the inhabitants infinite alarm by his savage instigations to the populace to butcher the prisoners.* His absence from the camp this morning was a sign that mischief was intended. Mr. Hay, having met him and discovered his purpose to remain in the town, ordered him, in the name of the Commander-in-Chief, to repair instantly to the Three Rocks. The fellow refused. Mr. Hay remonstrated with him for keeping his men in the town in violation of the general orders: he replied that he detained them with a view to *supply the place of the gaol-guards*, who had never been in any battle, and who ought to be made to take their turn with the rest. Hay thereupon galloped off to the camp, to procure a detachment of sober, trusty men to keep Dixon and his gang in awe. On his return to the town, four hours afterwards, he found it swarming with vast crowds of fugitives, driven in from the country by the march of the royal troops. "These were," he says, "continually relating their misfortunes, the cruelties they suffered, and the hardships they endured, to those with whom they took refuge; which roused and irritated the populace to such a pitch of fury as admits not of description, and of which none but an eye-witness can have an adequate idea. All entreaties and remonstrances to sooth or calm the exasperated multitude were in vain: however, continuing still on horseback, I endeavoured to address, explain, excuse, and expostulate, and in the course of these attempts many pikes were raised against me, and several guns and pistols cocked and pointed at me, and vengeance vowed against me as an Orangeman; for they vociferated that I had distinguished myself by no other feat but activity in protecting their enemies, the Orangemen; that I had never attended their camps, or I would be a judge of their miseries by the view of general desolation. One man would roar out, that I had not been flogged as he had been; another pathetically related that his house had been burned, and he had been driven to beggary with his whole family, and he would have the death of the person that injured him; a third lamented the death of his father, another that of his brother, others of their children; and the appeal was made to me, to decide on all their various sufferings and misfortunes; while

* The following occurrence had taken place a few days before:—

"The town of Wexford, being in a state of the utmost tranquillity, was all at once thrown into the most violent confusion and alarm by a great cavalcade coming into it over the bridge, preceded by Captain Dixon and his wife, who rode through the streets; while he, with gesture and expression the most outrageous, exhibited a *fire-screen*, ornamented with various emblematical figures representing some heathen gods, and with orange bordering, fringe, and tassels, which he represented as the insignia of an Orange-lodge; and the figures he tremendously announced as the representations of the tortures which the Catholics were to suffer from Orangemen; calling on the people to take signal vengeance, as he produced to them, he said, the discovery of the whole plot, found at Artramont, the seat of Colonel Le Hunte. It is impossible to describe the fury of the people on this occasion, roused to the most violent pitch in an instant, and only to be accounted for on the principle of their supposition, or rather persuasion, of their intended extermination, which the sight of anything orange awakened in the most sensitive manner. When Captain Dixon had, by this infernal and tumultuous conduct, assembled almost all the inhabitants of the town (whose frenzy, on seeing the orange ornaments, and hearing his assertions most desperately vociferated, it is impossible to describe), he proceeded directly to the house wherein Colonel Le Hunte lodged, dragged him out and marched him down to the gaol, amidst a furious and enraged mob, by whom it is wonderful that his life was spared at the instant."—Hay, pp. 197-198.

they perseveringly declared they only wanted to be avenged of those who had actually done them wrong; and I was asked, if similarly circumstanced, would I not take revenge for such injuries as theirs?*"†

The appeal was a perplexing one; but Mr. Hay met it by urging that, at all events, no man—not even a house-burning magistrate of the name of Turner, against whom they were particularly clamorous—should be punished without a trial; and he spoke to them of the "indefeasible laws of God." These poor people had, however, a wild, barbarous notion of their own that the *lex talionis* was one of the indefeasible laws of God. Good Mr. Hay was answered by a universal cry, "*What trial did we or our friends and relations obtain*, when some were hanged or shot, and others whipped, or otherwise tortured, our houses and properties burned and destroyed, and ourselves hunted like mad dogs?" Yet he did succeed at last, with great difficulty and no small personal danger, in procuring the appointment of a tribunal of seven, sworn to try the prisoners justly according to the evidence; and then found it prudent to retire, and leave the popular court-martial to do its work.

The tribunal of seven sat, accordingly, in a small room adjoining the gaol. But the result of their adjudications was far from satisfactory to the murderously inclined of the populace. A majority of four to three were resolute for mercy, and would not capitally convict a man of the prisoners. Dixon and his comrades, overruled and foiled at every point, were about to leave the place, and all might have ended well, when, "as ill fate would have it," two of the prisoners, of the names of Jackson and O'Connor, turned informers, threw themselves on their knees to Dixon, acknowledged themselves Orangemen, and undertook to give information, provided their lives were spared. The populace now became ungovernable. It was voted by acclamation that the business should be gone on with at once; the evidence of the informers would be trial and conviction enough, without further formalities. The first man whom these wretches denounced was instantly dragged out, and shot at the gaol door.

The work of blood then went on fast. Eighteen prisoners, with whom it was intended to begin, were marched out from the gaol under a strong guard, headed by Dixon and flanked by the two Orange informers, and more were sent for as they were wanted. A sort of revolutionary tribunal, under Dixon's presidency, sat in a billiard-room on the quay. A word from the informers was evidence; evidence was conviction; and conviction was death. The victims were led down to the bridge, amid loud cheers, "in successive parcels of from ten to twenty, with horrible solemnity, each parcel surrounded by its guard of butchers, and preceded by a black flag marked with a white cross."† On arriving at the place of execution, ap-

* Hay, p. 211.

† Plowden's "Historical Review," vol. ii., p. 748.

Much has been said and speculated about this "black flag, marked with a white cross"—other accounts say a *blood-red* cross; and the lively imagination of some of the ascendancy historians has devised a horrible significance for the initials "M. W. S." inscribed on the other side of this portentous banner—i.e., as they say, *Murder Without Sin*. All which, of course, very satisfactorily proves that the rebellion of 1798 was neither more nor less than the explosion of a Popish plot, and that the Catholic religion inculcates the sinlessness and meritoriousness of murdering Protestants.

This pleasant Protestant faith has, however, been rudely assailed by writers fully equal, in point of credibility, to the best of the tribe of Musgraves and Taylors. On the black-

peal was made to the multitude—Did any one know any good action of the intended victim, sufficient to save his life? In default of a satisfactory answer (a few were saved by the bold and humane interference of bystanders), execution immediately followed. Some were shot; the majority were piked, with circumstances of great barbarity; and the bodies thrown over the bridge. For some hours this horrible business went on; and it would, for anything that appears to the contrary, have continued till every prisoner in the town was slaughtered, but for the courageous interference of a Catholic clergyman and a rebel officer:—

“The Rev. Mr. Corrin,” says Hay, “who had been absent from the town the whole of the day on parochial duty, had but just returned when he was sent for by Mr. Kellett, then on his defence at the bridge. Thither the reverend gentleman instantly repaired, and, having thrown himself on his knees, entreated they might join him in prayer, when he supplicated the Almighty to show the same mercy to the people as they would show to their prisoners; and with that he addressed them in such feeling, pathetic, and moving language, that he thereby saved the lives of several who had been just ordered to the bridge from the market-house by Dixon. While the Rev. Mr. Corrin was on the fatal spot, Mr. Esmonde Kyan, who had been wounded in the shoulder at the battle of Arklow, lay in the most excruciating torture in a house at Ferry-bank, on the country side of the wooden-bridge; but on hearing what was going forward, he instantly got out of bed, ran to the fatal spot, and by his animated conduct and address rescued Mr. Newton King, and Captain Milward, of the Wexford militia, with some others, from the fury of the populace. General Edward Roche, also, by his humane interference, snatched Mr. James Goodall and others from the jaws of death; while different other persons of inferior note, and some even of the lower class, interposed so as to save one or other of their neighbours; and at length it pleased God that this horrid butchery ceased! The Catholic clergymen and all the principal inhabitants who remained in the town that day, exhausted every means in their power in endeavours to appease the rage of the populace, of whom, it is necessary to observe, they could have little or no personal knowledge, as the outrageous multitude had collected from the northern parts of the county, and not at all composed of Wexford men, over whom they might be supposed to have some local influence.”*

While this scene was going on in Wexford, the British Commander-in-Chief was completing his preparations for the grand finishing stroke against the power of the insurgents. By the evening of the 20th all was ready.

flag question, Mr. Hay says (p. 222):—“It is an absolute fact that this identical black flag was, throughout the whole insurrection, borne by a particular corps; and the carrying of banners of that colour was by no means a singular circumstance during that period, as flags of that and every other hue, except orange, were waved by the insurgents.” If, for *Murder Without Sin*, we read *Marksmen*, *Wexford*, *Shelmaliere*, we have probably the true interpretation of the mystic initials. The marksmen or sharpshooters of the barony of Shelmaliere were a very important corps of the Wexford rebel army.

We borrow this explanation from Mr. Crofton Croker, the editor of the “*Memoirs of Joseph Holt*,” who gives it in a note to that work (vol. i., p. 90), on the authority of a member of the corps which carried the flag in question.

* Pp. 219-220. The number of the victims is stated by this writer (the best authority we have) at thirty-six.

The British generals were at their posts, with their several divisions (General Needham, from Arklow, excepted), and orders were given for a simultaneous attack to be made the next morning on the town of Enniscorthy and the camp of Vinegar Hill.

Soon after daybreak, on the 21st, the army began to move. General Johnson opened his assault on the town, while the Commander-in-Chief commenced his approach to the camp. General Lake had disposed his attack in four columns, with the view of surrounding the rebel forces and cutting off their retreat. The people were strong in numbers and in valour, but in nothing else. They had a few pieces of cannon, but they lacked ammunition: the whole stores of the camp supplied barely enough for two rounds. They had their thousands of pikemen; but pikemen could not do much against such artillery, so posted and so served, as the British general brought against them. They had hoped to see Edward Roche, with the Shelmaliers marksmen (the only first-rate musketeers in their whole army) and the other reinforcements ordered from Wexford: but Edward Roche had only been able to get away from Wexford late the evening before, and the reinforcements were still on the road. Nothing remained for them but to fight as well as they could, and as long as they could, and then to retreat, if they could. They maintained their position "obstinately," as the enemy expressed it, for two hours. Their "fortitude" under that tremendous fire has been the theme of admiration with historians who had few sympathies with rebels. "A storm of shells and grape was poured on the fanatical multitude; the priests encouraged them by exhortations, the women by their cries; and every shell that broke among the crowd was followed by shouts of defiance."* General Lake's horse was shot, many of his officers wounded, and some killed. The royal troops advanced slowly but steadily up the hill, continually repulsed by the pikemen, yet continually recovering themselves and gaining ground, under the protection of their artillery. To this the rebels had nothing to oppose. Their cannon lay silent and useless on the hill—two rounds had exhausted their ammunition. At length it became plain that by no possible effort of skill or valour could they keep their ground without reinforcements; but of General Edward Roche's urgently besought and anxiously expected aid, no sign was to be seen. Enveloped in a torrent of fire, they broke and fled. It was well for them that they could fly. The British general's plan had been to let not a man escape: but in this he was disappointed; one entire division of his army did not come into the field until the battle was over. The absence of General Needham from his post left open to the insurgents a retreat to Wexford, through a country where neither artillery nor cavalry could act efficiently against them.

On the first sign of their flight, the British cavalry attempted to follow them: but at this critical moment Edward Roche came up with his reinforcements, threw himself between the defeated army and their pursuers, and with much ability covered their retreat. They reached Wexford in safety, encamped at their old station of the Three Rocks, and prepared for a vigorous defence of that position.

The conflict in the town of Enniscorthy was even more sanguinary than the action on Vinegar Hill. General Johnson's attack was bold and well conducted: the defence was animated by the fierce courage of despair.

* Barrington.

Like their brethren on Vinegar Hill, the insurgents in Enniscorthy were woefully deficient in ammunition. A few pounds of gunpowder were the whole of their stock; they had only naked physical strength and dogged endurance, to oppose to an army perfectly equipped and appointed with everything that belongs to the *matériel* of scientific warfare. For two hours they stood their ground, led by Edward Fitzgerald, of New-park. The British cannon made deadly havoc among them; but, as rank after rank of them was mown down, new men were ready to take their place. The carnage was frightful. The contest ended at last, in the only way in which, in the nature of things, it could end—the British troops entered the town.

And then came all the usual atrocities which mark every royalist success in this horrible campaign, together with some that were altogether unusual even then and there. Besides the customary plunderings, burnings, and murders, the victorious British troops and their Hessian allies (for foreign mercenaries were hired on the occasion) actually *burned a hospital, with the patients in it*. A large house in Enniscorthy, which the insurgent leaders had had fitted up for the reception of their sick and wounded, was totally consumed, with all its helpless, unresisting inmates, to the number, some say of more than thirty, others of nearly eighty.* Of other atrocities now perpetrated by the victorious military, we cannot speak but in generalities. During the days immediately following this success of the government troops, it could not have been worse for Enniscorthy and the country round, had Wexford been overrun by some horde of Cossacks, Calmucks, or Cherokees from beyond the outskirts of civilisation, and almost of humanity itself. The country, cleared of its armed men, was scoured by the soldiery in all directions, in quest of victims of cruelty and lust. Old men and children—"idiots and fools" even—were put to cruel deaths; and women everywhere encountered the fate worse than death. The Ancient Britons and the Hompesche Dragoons (German mercenaries) were the most conspicuous in these abominations.†

The 21st of June was an anxious and a busy day in the town of Wexford, whose situation was now critical in the extreme. With three royal armies approaching to invest it by land, and gun-boats blockading the har-

* Historic impartiality requires us to inform the reader that this piece of military atrocity, though never denied, has been "explained." A surgeon who was present assured Mr. Gordon (see his "History of the Rebellion") that "the burning was accidental, the bed-clothes being set on fire by the wadding of the soldiers' guns, who were shooting the patients in their beds."

† The people could, on occasion, do atrocious things as well as the military: but of one species of outrage the rebels are pronounced not guilty, by all the historians of the time, with a unanimity to which we are not aware that the exception of a single dissentient voice exists. In no one instance, during the Irish Rebellion of 1798, in the north or in the south, was a woman, whether of high or low degree, injured or insulted by the people.

With any particular account of the conduct of the military in this respect we shall not nauseate the reader. *Vide*, in general, the histories of the time, *passim*; and, in particular, a note of Plowden's "Historical Review," vol. ii., p. 705.

The whole of this disgusting and loathsome subject is contained, by implication, in what a certain Captain of yeomanry said to Mr. John Blachford, of Altadore, in the county of Wicklow, when the latter complained of a horrid outrage committed by three men of the captain's corps:—"The crime is great; but consider the times, my dear sir—it would be dangerous to punish the yeomanry."—"Life of Grattan," vol. iv., p. 393.

bour, a successful defence was out of the question : and the consequences of an unsuccessful attempt at defence were too hideous to be contemplated. It had been proposed, late on the evening of the 20th, in conversation between Mr. Hay and Lord Kingsborough, to try to obtain terms for the town through the intercession of the latter ; and his lordship, who had excellent reasons of his own for dreading to be shut up in the place by a siege, cordially concurred in the plan. Before three o'clock on the morning of the 21st he sent again for Mr. Hay. There was no time to lose ; for they " distinctly heard the report of the cannon from Enniscorthy, where the battle had just then commenced." The principal inhabitants were instantly " rapped up," and in a short time the whole town was awake. A meeting was held at the house of Captain Keugh, which Lord Kingsborough attended ; when it was decided, with little debate, that the town should be immediately surrendered to his lordship, as military commander ; that Dr. Jacob, the former mayor, should resume his office—so that all civil and military authority should be replaced in " legitimate " hands ; and that deputations should be sent to the head-quarters of the several royal armies—at Enniscorthy, Oulard, and Taghmon—to acquaint them with the capitulation. The meeting then adjourned to the Custom House Quay, to propose this arrangement to the people, who signified their approval by three cheers. Captain Keugh, as revolutionary governor, then surrendered his sword with the due formalities to Lord Kingsborough, as legitimate governor, and the town of Wexford re-entered into the king's peace.

Lord Kingsborough, thus invested with the military governorship of Wexford, immediately wrote dispatches to the several generals in command of the armies approaching the town, informing them—

" That the town of Wexford had surrendered to him, and in consequence of the behaviour of those in the town during the rebellion, *they should all be protected in person and property (murderers excepted,* " and those who had instigated others to commit murder), hoping these terms might be ratified, as he *had pledged his honour in the most solemn manner to have these terms fulfilled* on the town being surrendered to him ; the Wexford men not being concerned in the massacre, which was perpetrated by the country people in their absence."

With these dispatches were inclosed the following proposals from the people of Wexford :—

" That Captain M'Manus shall proceed from Wexford toward Oulard, accompanied by Mr. Edward Hay, appointed by the inhabitants of all religious persuasions, to inform the officer commanding the king's troops that they are ready to deliver up the town of Wexford without opposition, to lay down their arms, and return to their allegiance, provided that their persons and properties are guaranteed by the commanding officer ; and that they will use every influence in their power to induce the people of the country at large to return to their allegiance ; and these terms it is hoped Captain M'Manus will be able to procure.

" Signed by order of the inhabitants of Wexford,

" MATTHEW KEUGH.

" Wexford, June 21, 1798."

Captain M'Manus and Mr. Hay set out accordingly ; and had got as far as

Castle Bridge, when, finding that the division of the royal army which had been stationed at Oulard had moved towards Enniscorthy, they proceeded to the latter place. Their way lay through a country "in a most dreadful situation; houses on fire, dead men and women strewed along the road and in the fields, while the soldiers were hunting for such as might be concealed in the ditches, and bringing down every person they met; in fine, it was altogether a dreadful picture, exhibiting all the horrors of war." On their arrival at the sacked and burning town, they were fortunately met by a party of Captain M'Manus's regiment (the Antrim Militia), and escorted by them to the presence of the Commander-in-Chief, to whom they delivered their dispatches. The news of their arrival having quickly spread through the town, numbers of officers, yeomen, and gentlemen crowded about them, "some anxious to hear of their friends, while others expressed how disappointed they would be if hindered to demolish Wexford, with all the concomitant horrors and atrocities usual on such dreadful and shocking occasions. Some had the savage indecency even to mention some young ladies by name, who they intended should experience the effects of their brutal passions before they would put them to death; but these intentions they feared would be frustrated, by the account I gave them of the proposal and dispatches; others wished the extermination of all Catholics."*

They remained at Enniscorthy that night; and early the next morning Mr. Hay was sent back to Wexford, with the Commander-in-Chief's answer, which was stern, hard, and threatening:—

"*LIEUTENANT-GENERAL LAKE cannot attend to any terms by rebels in arms against their sovereign: while they continue so, he must use the force intrusted to him with the utmost energy for their destruction. To the deluded multitude he promises pardon on their delivering into his hands their leaders, surrendering their arms, and returning with sincerity to their allegiance.*

"G. LAKE.

"Enniscorthy, June 22nd, 1798."

The disappointed envoy expressed his fears that the answer would not be pleasing to the people of Wexford, as it did not ratify the terms promised by Lord Kingsborough. But no other answer was to be had. General Lake had nothing to do with Lord Kingsborough's promises, nor would he so much as send any reply to his dispatches. He ordered Hay to return to Wexford, and come back to him, without loss of time, with a positive answer from the "rebels" (bringing Lord Kingsborough with him), as he was determined not to discontinue the march of the army; and "if any fatality should happen to Lord Kingsborough, or any of the prisoners, *nothing should dissuade him from his original intention of annihilating the town.*" The object is clear enough: he wished to annihilate the town, and purposely threw every difficulty in the way of that surrender which would leave no decent pretext for a siege and a storm.

It was well for Wexford that there was a British general nearer at hand than the Commander-in-Chief, and of a far different mood of mind from that hard and cruel man. Wexford had surrendered already that morning, and was safe. The Three-Rocks camp had been broken up, on the completion of the arrangement with Lord Kingsborough, and the insur-

* Hay, p. 235.

gent army marched away in two divisions from the neighbourhood of the town; and General SIR JOHN MOORE * had thereupon approached Wexford from Taghmon with an overwhelming force, and accepted its surrender in due military form. The transaction was already completed before the arrival of the Commander-in-Chief, and could not, by any ingenuity, be re-opened. There was no help for it: General Lake was bound by military law, whatever his wishes and previous intentions, to recognise the capitulation, and enter the place in peace.

The rebellion was now crushed; and "order," according to the military and magisterial idea of order, reigned again in Wexford. Party ferocity, disappointed of the anticipated siege, storm, and sack, began forthwith to sate itself in another way. Arrests and executions were incessant, and courts-martial laboured diligently in the service of Orangeism. The terms of the capitulation made by the inhabitants with Lord Kingsborough were utterly disregarded. Relying on the faith of his lordship's promise of protection to life and property, many persons, more or less implicated, or supposed to be implicated in the late events, remained in Wexford, unsuspecting of danger. They discovered their mistake when they were taken up and thrown into gaol. Almost all the principal inhabitants were arrested on charges of treason. The Reverend Philip Roche came in, unarmed and alone, from the camp at Sledagh (whither he had led his division of the popular army on leaving the Three Rocks), in the confident hope of obtaining favourable terms for the men under his command. His conspicuous person was immediately recognised on his advance within the lines of the royal army; he was "dragged from his horse, and, in the most ignominious manner taken up to the camp on the Windmill Hills, pulled by the hair, kicked, buffeted, and at length hauled down to the gaol in such a condition as scarcely to be recognised."† Captain Keugh had remained quietly at Lord Kingsborough's lodgings after the surrender, but was speedily thrown into gaol. Mr. Cornelius Grogan, a poor gouty old gentleman, who had not been in any of the battles, who could not even mount his horse without help—but whom the people, after their success of the 30th of May, had hurried along with them by main force and the persuasive of a loaded blunderbuss, and nominated their commissary—was likewise arrested at his seat of Johnstown, and dragged to prison. Harvey had gone home to Bargy Castle, without a thought of danger, delighted that the business was so well over. He had actually sent some fine fat cattle into Wexford, for the use of the royal troops. But the intelligence brought back to him, on the return of his messenger, of the state of things in the town, was such that he took instant alarm and hastened after his friend Colclough, who had sought refuge with his wife and child in a cave in one

* "General Moore, on consultation with Lord Kingsborough, thought it most advisable not to let his troops into the town, which it had been determined to annihilate previous to the negotiation; and in consequence of this circumstance, of which the army was perfectly aware, it required the utmost precaution to prevent its being plundered, sacked, and destroyed, with the attendant atrocities."—Hay, p. 241.

The behaviour of this gallant and humane officer throughout the war was worthy of his high reputation. He abhorred the cruelties of the time, and did his utmost to check them. "*If I were an Irishman, I should be a rebel,*" was his confidential comment to Mr. Grattan on the scenes he was daily doomed to witness.—"Life of Grattan," vol. iv., p. 393.

† Plowden.

of the Saltee Islands, on the southern coast. They were discovered (23rd of June), brought into Wexford in military triumph, in the midst of an immense concourse of people, and confined in the condemned cells.* All these prisoners—Roche, Keugh, Grogan, Harvey, and Colclough—without regard to the compulsion under which some of them had acted, and the many humane and generous acts of others,† shared one common fate. They were tried by court-martial for high treason, condemned, and executed with circumstances (except in Colclough's case) of savage and indecent brutality. Harvey and Grogan were pursued, even in death, by the malice or cupidity of their enemies: their large estates were confiscated by parliamentary attainder.

* Sir Richard Musgrave gives the following account of their apprehension:—

"Dr. Waddy, a physician, who served in the yeomanry, having got intelligence of their retreat, applied to General Lake for a proper party and an armed vessel to go in quest of them, which he readily obtained. On landing, they repaired to the only house on the island, occupied by one Furlong, who rented it from Mr. Colclough. They found there an excellent feather-bed, with fine sheets, which were warm, a handsome tea equipage, some genteel wearing apparel belonging to both sexes, particularly a pair of pantaloons which Dr. Waddy had seen on Mr. Colclough before the rebellion; and near the house, some silk shoes and other articles, hid in high ferns. They searched every suspected spot on the island, particularly a place called the Otter's Cave, but in vain; though they had not a doubt of their having been there, as they had found, among other things, a chest of plate concealed in a place belonging to Colclough.

"The Doctor resolved to make another effort by going round the island in a boat, for the purpose of reconnoitring the sides of it. In doing so, he perceived on the edge of a high precipice one rock lighter coloured than the adjoining ones; and as the earth near it seemed to have been recently stirred, he suspected they had been making preparations there for their concealment. He therefore again ascended the island, and found that the approach to the place which he wished to explore was steep, serpentine, and through some crags. The light-coloured stone covered the mouth of the cave, and above it there was an aperture to let in the light. The Doctor called out to Colclough, and told him, that if he did not surrender immediately, and without resistance, he should receive no quarter. Colclough asked, 'Is that Doctor Waddy?' and on his saying 'yes,' he said he would surrender; and soon after, he, at the Doctor's desire, gave up his arms through the hole in the cave. The Doctor threw down the precipice the stone which covered the mouth of it, which fell with a monstrous crash, on which Mr. and Mrs. Colclough came forth, dressed in the meanest habits of peasants for the purpose of disguising themselves. Then B. Harvey came out, saying, 'My God, my God!' and so pale and weak from fatigue and anxiety of mind, that the doctor was obliged to support him. He also had a chest of plate concealed, which he gave in charge to the Doctor and his party."

† It would be more correct to say—regard being had most rigidly to every such act, for the purpose of crimination. By Irish court-martial law in 1798, every instance of successful humanity on the part of a reputed rebel leader told against the prisoner; it was a sign of influence with the rebels, and therefore a proof of guilt.

One of the chief witnesses against Mr. Grogan was a lady, who gave evidence that, when her family in the town were in want of food, she had sent to him to request an order for bread; which request, to save her family from starving, he reluctantly complied with. That order for bread was life to the starving children, but death to poor Mr. Grogan. This constructive and implied exercise of the functions of commissary to the rebel army, was an overt act of high treason.

Grogan's case was not a solitary one. Gordon says—"The display of humanity by a rebel was, in general, in trials by court-martial, by no means regarded as a circumstance in favour of the accused. Strange as it may seem in times of cool reflection, it was very frequently urged as a proof of guilt. Whoever could be proved to have saved a loyalist from assassination, his house from burning, or his property from plunder, was considered as having influence among the rebels; consequently, a rebel commander." It is said of a gentleman implicated in the rebellion, that he exclaimed, in anticipation of his trial, "*I thank my God no man can prove me guilty of saving anybody's life or property.*"

With the last of these executions, on the 27th of June, the reign of military license and terrorism in Wexford was brought to a close. A change had already taken place, with the arrival of a new Viceroy (Lord Cornwallis), in the temper—in the policy, at least—of Dublin Castle, and it was time that Wexford should feel the benefit of it. On the 28th, General Lake was ordered away elsewhere. He was succeeded by General HUNTER, a merciful and upright man, who conciliated the people and made himself terrible to their tyrants, by a government of common justice and common sense. The new Commander-in-Chief soon “found,” says Plowden, “that *the only severity he had to exercise was upon the gentry and yeomanry*, whose sanguinary and vindictive exertions it became necessary to check, lest the people should be goaded into a relapse.”* These gentry and yeomanry did all that men possibly could do to get up a new rebellion; and, with a weak and pliant-minded officer in command, they must infallibly have succeeded. A constant system of alarm was kept up, for the obvious purpose of precipitating the government into violent and cruel measures, the reaction of which would have been a second civil war, with more massacres, more burnings, plunderings, and confiscations. The purpose seems too diabolical to be ascribed to human creatures; but the thing is matter of history. Rumours were most industriously circulated of an approaching general massacre of the Protestants: magisterial applications and remonstrances were sent to government, complaining of outrages and disturbances (when the only real disturbers were their own house-breaking, house-burning, and peasant-shooting yeomanry). Affidavits were sent to Dublin, carefully framed with all the circumstantiality suited to win belief, that the whole of a large and populous quarter of the county, called the Macomores, was infested with constant meetings of “rebels,” and was on the verge of a new rising; and the extermination of all its inhabitants by fire and sword was actually planned and ordered, subject only to General Hunter’s approval. Orders were sent to the generals and other commanding officers in and contiguous to the devoted tract of country, to form a cordon along its whole extent on the western border, and at both ends, north and south, on the land side, so as to leave the inhabitants no alternative but to be butchered by the soldiery or driven into the sea. Happily, General Hunter did not, on inquiry, approve any such thing. He discovered, by a minute and laborious investigation, that the whole business was an enormously wicked conspiracy, and was only restrained by the most urgent intercessions of many gentlemen and ladies, and by a clemency the indulgence of which he afterwards regretted, from bringing its concocters to court-martial justice.†

* Sir John Moore was not long of making the same discovery in Wicklow, where he was stationed after the suppression of the Wexford insurrection. In his report to the Lord Lieutenant on the state of his county, later in the year, he said, “That the presence of troops might be necessary for some time longer, but it would be more to check the yeomanry and the Protestants than the people.”

† See a full account of this affair in Hay, p. 273 *et seq.*

The audacity of these people was such that some of them went the length of *tearing the written protections* which the peasantry had received on surrendering their arms; “but this coming to the General’s knowledge, he soon quieted them by threatening to have them tied to a cart’s tail and whipped.” A certain curate of the Protestant church “was induced to wait on the General with an account of the *intended massacre* of the Protestants, which he detailed with the appearance of the utmost alarm, and was

The General persevered in his wise and pacific course, and gained the affections, the gratitude, and the confidence of the people, who flocked in by crowds to surrender their arms and take out certificates of protection. Wexford had peace at last—or what, in Ireland, might pass for peace.

The great mass of the Wexford insurgents, however, continued in arms for a considerable period after the pacification of their county. We have mentioned that on the capitulation to Lord Kingsborough the rebel army broke up their camp at the Three Rocks, and marched away in two divisions. They made good their retreat, notwithstanding every effort of the royal forces to surround and intercept them. One division went northward into Wicklow. The other pushed westward, through Carlow, into Kilkenny and Queen's County, fighting every inch of their way, on many occasions with serious loss to their opponents. This division had some active skirmishing, on the 23rd, with a detachment under Sir Charles Asgill; and on the 24th captured and burned the town of Castlecomer, in Kilkenny. They afterwards pressed rapidly on into Queen's County. Their leaders had hoped, by a bold and vigorous demonstration, to arouse an insurrectionary movement in the country through which they marched; but, disappointed in this expectation, not finding themselves anywhere joined by the inhabitants, worn out with toil, weakened by desertion, and perpetually harassed by the king's troops, they resolved to return homeward. On the night of the 25th they encamped on an eminence called Killcomney Hill. The next morning they found themselves surrounded by the enemy, who had approached them unobserved, nearly two thousand strong, under cover of a dense fog; a heavy fire from the royal artillery was the first intimation they received of the perilousness of their position. Fighting was out of the question: but they succeeded, with a severe loss, in effecting a retreat, forced their way through the pass of Scollagh-gap, and re-entered Wexford. Most of them dispersed to their homes, and never reappeared in arms; a few still held together, and joined their comrades in Wicklow.

The northern division of the Wexford army, under Edward Fitzgerald of New-park, and Edward Roche, kept the field some weeks longer; maintaining a fierce and rapid, but desultory warfare, in which great military skill was displayed, many feats of daring valour were performed, and the royal troops very severely harassed, but no results of permanent importance accomplished. The strength of the rebellion was by this time thoroughly broken; and the chief effect of this posthumous insurrection—latterly, its only object—was to render the insurgents of sufficient consequence to be negotiated with by the government, and admitted to honourable terms of capitulation. In this they were to a great extent successful.

The first scene of these irregular partisan hostilities was the county of Wicklow, where the rugged, mountainous character of the ground afforded a fine field for this kind of warfare. On the night of the 24th, the remnant of the Wexford army encamped at Ballymanus, where they formed a

patiently heard out with the greatest complacency by the General; who, when the curate had ended, addressed him with this marked appellation and strong language:—*'Mr. Massacre, if you do not prove to me the circumstances you have related, I shall get you punished in the most exemplary manner for raising false alarms, which have already proved so destructive to this unfortunate country.'*" The curate's apprehensions of massacre, it is needless to say, rapidly subsided.

temporary junction with a band of Wicklow insurgents, under Garret Byrne and Joseph Holt.* After an unsuccessful attack on Hacketstown, on the morning of the 25th, from which place they were repulsed with great slaughter at the end of a conflict of nine hours, the combined forces marched southward to the Wexford frontier, with the view of surprising

* The character and history of this extraordinary man, as shown in his very lively and entertaining, but rather self-glorifying "Memoirs," will repay attention. Holt's exploits have little direct relation to the great public events of 1798, but they form an interesting episode of much illustrative value.

JOSEPH HOLT, before the rebellion, was a substantial Wicklow Protestant farmer, and a large dealer in wool—industrious, peaceable, loyal, and well-to-do in the world. He had at different times filled the offices of constable of his barony, overseer of public works, deputy billet-master, and others of a similar grade. He was nothing of a demagogue or agitator; had never meddled, either as United Irishman or otherwise, with "them that are given to change," detested political agitation in general, and United Irish agitation in particular—and speaks, throughout his "Memoirs," of the cause of liberty in a most unedifying tone of aversion and contempt. Holt was every way a loyal, conservative, and "respectable" man—with one drawback: he had a humane and honest heart, had no liking for Orangeism, and never would join his Protestant neighbours in persecuting and insulting Catholics. The consequence of which was that Holt became a marked man.

When the rebellion broke out, he was denounced as disaffected by an Orange squireen who bore him a private grudge; a party of yeomanry went to his house, fortunately in his absence, to arrest him. The usual consequence of a disappointed domiciliary visit ensued; he returned, and found his comfortable home a smoking wreck. From that hour Holt became a rebel. He rushed "like a fury" to a place called "The Devil's Glen," and there passed the night in a cave, "where were collected," he says, "a few unfortunate persecuted creatures like myself, and we recounted to each other our misfortunes and our wretched fate." This was on the 10th of May. Common sufferings and wrongs soon prompted common efforts for self-protection and revenge. The next day Holt followed the example of his companions in misery, and took the United Irishmen's oath. By the end of a week he found himself the elected leader of a hundred and sixteen men. Persecution and oppression daily increased the numbers of this little corps of Defenders. First hundreds, and afterwards thousands of "poor devils," hunted out of house and home like himself, placed themselves under his command, and Holt became successively a colonel and a general.

The Rebellion of 1798—like all other rebellions which do not grow to the size of revolutions—has been called "unnatural." In poor Holt's case, as in thousands of others, rebellion was the most natural thing in the world for a man to do—the dictate of nature's universal law of self-preservation. His philosophy of the matter is extremely simple. He says—"I had, in short, no alternative; I might escape by continuing a rebel to my king, but certain destruction followed my return to the quarters of the military." It is pleasant to know that, by "continuing a rebel to his king," Holt actually did escape. On the 10th of November, precisely six months from the first night in the Devil's Glen, after successfully defying during the whole of that time the combined efforts of the king's troops and the yeomanry, in an area of little more than twenty miles square, at no point more than thirty miles from the metropolis—executing many skilful retreats, and gaining some brilliant successes—he was admitted to terms with the government, through Lord Powerscourt.

As a military leader, Holt was humane, generous, and just. "Driven into rebellion," as he says, "to save his life," he treated other men's lives with as much tenderness as the necessities of his position permitted. He frequently interfered to save prisoners from slaughter, and boasts—so far as appears, truly—that he never committed an act of wanton cruelty, or was guilty of murder in cold blood. He discountenanced and punished the predatory propensities of his followers and allies, and on one occasion ("Memoirs," vol. i., p. 169) denounced to the British general a band of robbers who pretended to belong to his army.

After many years' absence from his country in New South Wales (transportation was the condition on which his surrender was accepted), Holt received a free pardon, and returned to Ireland. He died near Dublin, in May, 1826.

the garrison of Carnew, a post regarded by both parties as of the utmost consequence. The enterprise seemed a hopeful one; the garrison were ignorant of their being in the neighbourhood, and no measures of defence had been taken. But General Needham, then stationed at Gorey, received timely intelligence of their movements, and detached a force of some hundreds of cavalry to intercept their march; a large number of these were of the detested corps of *Ancient Britons*. The royalist party came up with the advanced guard of the insurgents on their road to Carnew, at a place called BALLYELLIS, and charged them furiously. The rebels were, however, prepared by previous information to expect the enemy—had, in fact, been waiting for them at that particular point of the road. On receiving the charge of the cavalry they fled—in obedience to orders. The British troops pursued them, “sure,” says Holt, “they had it all their own way, and had but to push on and cut down all before them”—pursued them into a deep, narrow defile, formed by “thick and strong hedges of crab and thorns on each side.” No sooner were they between these hedges than a raking fire was opened on them, right and left, from hundreds of invisible musketeers. They were thrown into confusion, and attempted a retreat. But no retreat was open; the extremity of the pass was found to be blocked up with cars, carts, and baggage, and a hundred musketeers guarded the barricades. All was disorder and panic—horses and men, wounded and dying, all crowded and jammed together—resistance and flight alike impossible; the pikemen rushed in and did the rest. The *Ancient Britons* were nearly annihilated in this affair; the rebels *lost not a man*. Notwithstanding the decisive success of this ambushade, the intended attack on Carnew was foiled. A few of the cavalry, in the heat and thick of the contest, burst the barriers by sheer force of weight and pressure, and made their way to Carnew. The garrison had time to put themselves in a posture of defence, and the assailants were successfully repelled.*

Baffled in their attempt on Carnew, the Wexford men turned again northward. Separating themselves from their Wicklow associates, they undertook a bolder and more distant enterprise than any they had previously attempted. They marched direct into the northern counties of Leinster, with the view of rousing the people of those counties into insurrection, and effecting a diversion in favour of Wexford, at that time the head-quarters of the British army in Ireland. The metropolis, and even Ulster, seemed not too remote for their sanguine hopes. Recruiting their cavalry from Kildare (famous for its breed of horses), they pushed rapidly on, skirting Dublin County, into Meath, and across the Boyne into Louth—sixteen

* To whom the credit of this brilliant manoeuvre belongs, is as difficult a problem as any in our history. Holt quietly appropriates the whole of it to himself. Teeling does not mention Holt, but ascribes it to the fine generalship of Fitzgerald. Dr. Madden (vol. i., p. 292) gives the chief part of it to one Dennis Taaffe (unnamed by the others), formerly a Catholic priest and Franciscan friar, afterwards a Protestant Hebrew professor in Dublin University, subsequently a political writer, at this time an adventurer in the rebel army. Dr. M. says, “Any one who has ever pursued inquiries on the subject of the exploits of the United Irishmen, or the engagements of the military with the former, will not wonder at the eagerness of the leaders of either party to thrust themselves forward in the foreground of the picture, and to figure on the scene as the chief, or perhaps the sole actors in it.”

The accounts of the numbers slain at Ballyellis vary from forty-six to three hundred and seventy, killed “in less than twenty minutes.”

hundred men, with eight hundred horses, each horse carrying a pikeman and a musketeer. By the celerity of their movements they completely eluded the pursuit of the royal forces, successfully skirmished with several parties detached from the neighbouring garrisons to intercept them, advanced within seven miles of Dublin, and forced two military stations to the north-west of the capital. But the main object of the expedition failed. Their hope of raising the people in arms was entirely disappointed; the inhabitants of Meath and Louth were in general supine, irresolute, and out of heart, and no insurrectionary movement could be effected. After some two or three weeks of marching and counter-marching, during which they traversed in different directions more than five hundred miles of country, with scarcely a day's rest from fighting, this last remnant of the insurgent army of Wexford was at length completely routed by Captain Gordon, of the Dumfries Light Dragoons, at the head of a strong party of horse and foot, at the village of Ballyboghill, ten miles north of the capital. They never more assembled in arms. Fitzgerald and a few of his comrades were fortunate enough to join Aylmer in Kildare, and were included in his capitulation to General Dundas on the 12th of July.

While the events narrated in the foregoing pages were in progress, ULSTER had had its insurrection already, and failed. Seven years of political agitation—three years of military organisation—had borne fruit in a hasty, ill-concerted movement, which lasted but a few days, produced not one important success to the popular arms, and was without influence on the general course of events. That we have not found occasion to mention the northern rising in its due chronological place, indicates not inaptly its true character. It was, in fact, a mere parenthesis in the Rebellion of 1798; beginning long after the beginning, and ending long before the end of the war generally, and in no way breaking the continuity of the great events of the year.

We left the Ulster United Irishmen, on the 29th of May, still debating, and resolving, and organising in their committee-room, and very much inclined to be of opinion that it would be better for them “not to meet again and deceive the people any longer.” It would have been well for them had they rested in that opinion: but it is not in human nature to spend seven years in organising, and do nothing at last. In the first week of June, the men of Ulster determined to take the field.

It was now that the mischiefs of that elaborate and complex mechanism of which the northerners had been so boastful, fatally disclosed themselves. After all their long-drawn preparations, they were at last taken unprepared, and obliged to act in a hurry. It had been intended that ANTRIM and DOWN, the two most important and best organised counties of the province, should both rise together; and had they done so, the consequences might have been serious. But their organisation stood in the way. On the 4th of June, three days before the time appointed for the general rising of the province, the Rev. Dr. William Steele Dickson, Adjutant-General for Down,* was arrested, with two of his staff. The others had warning, and escaped. A new Adjutant-General could not be

* This gentleman was a Presbyterian divine, of high character, fine intellect, and far-going political liberalism. He had been appointed as successor to Thomas Russell (the “P.P.” of *Tone's Journals*), on the arrest of the latter in the winter of 1798.

immediately appointed : the consequence was that Down was disorganised, and disorganisation was paralysis. The men of Down urged, accordingly, the necessity of delay. But Antrim was prepared, and would not hear of delay. Her colonels were already assembled in council, on the summons of their Adjutant-General, to make their final arrangements ; numbers had already quitted their homes to take the field, and were only waiting for orders to commence action ; when, to the astonishment and dismay of everybody, the Adjutant-General *resigned*.* All was now confusion and alarm ; treachery was apprehended ; men distrusted each other, and almost themselves. It was too late, however, to recede, committed as they then were. If there might be danger in going on, there was assuredly no safety in going back. Intelligence arrived, while they were debating, that the government troops were marching, and that the advanced guard of the British cavalry was within a mile of the scene of their deliberations.† After an anxious and hurried discussion, it was decided by the bolder spirits of the council (some had already sought safety in flight) to nominate HENRY JOY M'CRACKEN‡ Adjutant-General of their county, and Commander-in-Chief of the United Irish army of the north. He promptly obeyed the call, and proceeded to do all which man then could do, to re-piece the broken machinery, and bring the elaborately and cautiously bungled business to a successful issue.

The time was short, the enemy was on the alert, and rapid action must repair the mischiefs of lingering preparation. M'Cracken's first movement was on the town of ANTRIM, twelve miles distant from Belfast ; a place of great military value to the people, as necessary to open their communication with Derry and Donegal, where a powerful co-operation was expected. The new Commander-in-Chief issued forthwith the following orders:—

“ ARMY OF ULSTER ! ”

“ TO-MORROW we march on Antrim. Drive the garrison of Randals-

* Dr. Madden says (Second Series, vol. ii., p. 431), “ The Adjutant-General of Antrim was a gentleman who is still living, one of the first and most active promoters of the Society of United Irishmen.”

† See Teeling's “ Personal Narrative,” p. 229.

‡ Henry Joy M'Cracken, a Belfast cotton-manufacturer, was one of the very few United Irish leaders who actually engaged in the rebellion. We have already (p. 55) seen his name, in connexion with those of Tone, Neilson, and Russell, as one of the fathers and founders of the first Society of United Irishmen, in 1791. He had continued to take an active though unostentatious part in the business of the association, and had endured a year's imprisonment under the Habeas-Corpus-Suspension Act of 1796.

Dr. Madden gives a very interesting memoir of him (Second Series, vol. ii.) from materials furnished in great part by his sister. M'Cracken was one of the very best of the Irish patriots of 1798 ; a man of kind and generous heart, gentle manners, and strong will, sagacious in council, resolute and self-possessed in action. His civic virtues did not all run into political agitation : “ he was one of a few individuals who undertook the establishment of the first Sunday school in Belfast, between fifty and sixty years ago ; it was held in the old market-house, the place of his execution.” At the time of his death he was in his thirty-first year.

James Hope, the self-educated Belfast weaver, to whom Dr. Madden repeatedly acknowledges himself indebted for interesting and valuable historic materials, says, of this young patriot and general—“ Henry Joy M'Cracken was the most discerning and determined man of all our northern leaders, and by his exertions chiefly the union of the societies of the north and south was maintained. His memory is still fresh in the hearts of those who knew him. Forty winters have passed over it, and the green has not gone from it.”

"town before you, and haste to form a junction with the Commander-in-Chief.

"HENRY JOY M'CRACKEN.

"First Year of Liberty, 6th June, 1798."

The Commander-in-Chief kept his word; but the "Army of Ulster" had sadly dwindled down since the date of the returns of April, 1797, showing an organised and regimented force of a hundred thousand armed men. On the morning of the 7th, M'Cracken, disobeyed, deserted, and betrayed by the very officers who were to have formed his staff,* set out on his march from a place called Crerarogan Fort, a few miles from Antrim, with a force of not more than *one hundred men*. These were increased, by successive additions on their line of march, to somewhere about five hundred; † who "considered themselves," as well they might, "more as a forlorn hope, than a force having any well-founded expectation of a successful issue." Yet there were good soldiers among these five hundred. Many of them were of the old Volunteer corps, familiar with the musket, and not unacquainted with the use of artillery.

With this handful of an army, the dauntless young Commander-in-Chief began the insurrection of Ulster. They approached the scene of action in good military array. The musketeers marched in front, with firm and measured tread; the more numerous pikemen occupied the centre; and the rear was brought up by two brass field-pieces, six-pounders, old Volunteer cannon which had been hid for years in the Presbyterian meeting-house at Temple-Patrick. They marched in perfect order, singing the Marseillaise Hymn. On reaching an eminence within view of the town, their chief halted and harangued them, and was answered with acclamations, "Lead us to liberty or death." His eloquence was powerfully enforced by the arrival of fugitives from the town, who recounted in moving terms, the wrongs and insults they had received from the British garrison. Blazing peasants' cabins confirmed their tale.

The garrison were not unprepared for the reception of the assailants. Treachery had been at work in the rebel councils, and their plans were all betrayed in the very hour of their formation.‡ Major Seddon, the officer in command, had that morning received reinforcements from the government camp of Blaris Moore, and was in hourly expectation of fresh supplies. A bold and energetic attack was met, accordingly, by the determined resistance of a powerful and well-posted garrison. But the insurgents steadily advanced—the rebels of 1798 almost invariably fought well, panics

* James Hope says, "He drew up and signed the fighting orders for the 7th of June, and sent them to the officers who had been appointed and were expected to direct the movement of the people, but they declined to act." He also states that "*some of the colonels sent these orders to General Nugent, and we were betrayed at all points.*"—Madden, Second Series, vol. ii., pp. 449-451.

† This is James Hope's account (Ibid., p. 436), and is probably much nearer the truth than the official returns, which give the rebels a force of "some thousands."

‡ "The authorities at Belfast had been apprised of the intended rising at one o'clock in the morning, the day of the attack on Antrim. The rebel Directory at Belfast had determined on the attack at twelve o'clock, or a little past midnight, and one of the leaders of their Executive, within an hour after their deliberation, had communicated the result of it to General Nugent."—Ibid., p. 463.

Dr. Madden makes the above statement on the authority of the Rev. A. C. Macartney, vicar of Belfast.

excepted—and the conflict was fierce and sanguinary. James Hope says—

“ We marched into Antrim in good order, until our front arrived opposite the Presbyterian meeting-house, when a party of the 22nd Light Dragoons wheeled out of the lane below the church, fired on us, and then retreated. Another party then advanced from the same quarter, but was soon brought down, men and horse. The rest of their force fled to the market-house, and we advanced under a heavy fire from a body of foot, covered from our fire by the castle-wall and two field-pieces, by a shot from one of which a gun we had brought from Temple-Patrick, placed on a common car, was dismounted. We then went into the churchyard, and silenced the field-pieces, and relieved our pikemen from the shower of grape shot which they had stood without flinching. Part of our rear had been imprudently drawn up in a field on the left of the church, and rendered useless during the action. Another party, which had appeared on our right on the Donegore-road, as we entered the town, was ordered to enter the other side of the town, by the back of the gardens. On the approach of this party, the horsemen at the market-house, in danger of being surrounded, and being then galled by our fire, made a charge at full speed up the street, some of the troops having previously fled by Shane Castle-road. The body that charged soon fell by our pikemen.”*

These first successes were followed up with that daring and energetic valour of which we have had so many examples in the Wexford campaign. The enemy were at last forced from their guns; the royal cavalry were driven from the town; and, within one hour after their entry, the insurgents were masters of Antrim.

They had no sooner gained the town than they lost it again, *by a mistake.*

A body of five hundred of their friends had that morning marched from Connor and Kells to join them, had forced the garrison of Randals-town after a feeble and brief resistance, and were at this precise moment about to enter Antrim on the north. These new comers met the retreating British cavalry, *mistook their flight for a charge*, were panic-struck, and fled. The British troops took courage, rallied, re-entered the town, and the battle began again. The transaction was witnessed, meanwhile, by a small corps of observation which had followed the fugitive cavalry. They hastened back into the town with the news, and the panic spread. At the same time the expected reinforcements arrived for the garrison from Belfast and Blaris camp.

The event of the day was now virtually decided. “ Everything,” says Teeling, “ that talent and courage could suggest was attempted, on the part of M’Cracken, to restore order and re-animate the sinking spirit of his troops in that quarter where the panic most prevailed; but expostulation, encouragement, threat, all were alike disregarded. He seized a pike, and placing himself in the front, menaced with death the man who should dare to flinch from his colours: but terror had now taken possession of the breasts which had lately been fired to the highest excitement of courage, and, giving way to the most ungovernable fears, they sought safety in flight,

* Madden, Second Series, vol. ii., p. 451.

and actually bore down in their confused retreat the man who but a moment before had proudly led them to victory.* Their flight was more fatal than the most determined resistance, for, encountering a body of cavalry, many were cut down with an unsparing hand, and fell victims to that terror which too often plunges men into the misfortune they seek to avoid.

"One division still maintained its position, which, from its determined and heroic courage, M'Cracken had designated 'The Spartan Band.' This was commanded by the faithful Hope, a man whose talents were far above his fortunes, and whose fidelity, as well on this occasion as in subsequent calamities of his country, would have honoured the days of ancient chivalry. On this post a vigorous attack had been made, with the view of effecting a lodgement, which would have commanded an easy entrance to the town. It was assailed and defended with the most obstinate courage, but the assailants were forced to retire. A small detachment of cavalry which had debouched to the left advanced at full gallop, conceiving it to be in possession of the division of which they formed a part. Their alarm was equal to their surprise on finding themselves surrounded. They conceived their destruction inevitable, and awaited their fate in silence; but the generosity of Hope triumphed over every feeling of hostility or revenge. 'Go,' said he; 'your numbers are too few for the sacrifice—join your comrades, and tell them that the army of the Union feels no triumph in the destruction of the defenceless and the weak.' But the fate of the day had been already decided; every effort to rally on the part of M'Cracken was ineffectual: the panic from partial became general, and rout followed.

"The brave division of Hope was now obliged to abandon that post which they had so nobly maintained. They made a last effort to uphold the honour of the day: they marched with boldness, and in the face of a victorious enemy they halted. They presented an iron front; they sustained the fire of musketry and cannon; and retired with a reluctant step, when resistance was vain, and the last hope of victory had fled. They effected a retreat with order, and planted the tattered ensign of their valour on the heights of Donegore. Here M'Cracken collected such of his scattered forces as had escaped the perils of the day or retained firmness for another trial of arms."†

But it soon became clear that another trial of arms was not to be thought of. The spirit of the county was broken; and, with a feeble and disheartened remnant of scarcely a hundred men, nothing was to be done. M'Cracken indulged at first the hope of penetrating into Kildare or Wicklow; but the closely-watched and guarded state of the country rendered any such movement impracticable. Eventually he disbanded his little "Army of Ulster," recommending every man to do the best he could for himself; and with seven trusty friends endeavoured to make his own escape from the vigilance of the enemy. His endeavours were not successful. He was pursued, taken, tried by court-martial, and executed. The cheerful composure and

* Hope says—"Two of them, crossing a pike-handle against M'Cracken's breast, threw him down, when attempting to stop them and their comrades."

† Teeling's "Personal Narrative," pp. 236-238.

fortitude of M'Cracken's last moments worthily crowned an honourable and heroic life.

By the time the insurrection of Antrim was over, that of Down was ready to begin. On the 9th of June—two days after the result of the battle of Antrim had left the British forces in Ulster free to act against a new enemy—a small party of the United Irishmen of Down appeared in arms near Saintfield, in the north of the county. They were immediately forced into action, before they could assemble in any formidable number. The garrison of Newtownards, in the vicinity (a regiment of York Fencibles, under Colonel Stapleton), marched to disperse them. A sanguinary but indecisive action ensued, in which both sides suffered severely. Stapleton retreated to Comber, while the insurgents entered Saintfield and took quiet possession of the town. The next day, the rising became general in the northern parts of the county. Early in the morning a determined attack was made on the town of Portaferry: the assailants were repulsed by the vigorous and well-arranged efforts of the officer in command, a Captain Matthews.* In the course of the day another party took unresisted possession of Newtownards; from which place they marched the same night to Saintfield, the general rendezvous of the insurgent army of Down.

On the morning of the 11th, the United Irish forces at Saintfield numbered nearly seven thousand men. They unanimously elected as their commander MONROE, an old Volunteer; a man of good military talent, spoiled, says Teeling, by "a romantic love of glory and a mistaken feeling of honour." Monroe's first step was to dispatch an officer of the name of Townshend to take possession of BALLYNAHINCH. The garrison fled on Townshend's approach, and left the rebels masters of the place.

On the 12th, Monroe set out for Ballynahinch with the remainder of his force. He learned, on the way, that the British troops, under the command of General Nugent, supported by General Barber of the artillery, had marched from Belfast to intercept his movements. Presently the vicinity of the enemy was announced by its usual sign, the blazing cabins of the peasantry: "as far," says Teeling, "as the eye could discern, they had fired the country throughout their line of march." Monroe made his arrangements for defence in the best way that time and circumstances permitted, and succeeded for upwards of an hour in keeping the royal forces in check. But he had no cannon (a few small ship-guns excepted), and the British artillery was effective and well served. He was at length obliged to give way; sent instructions to Townshend to evacuate Ballynahinch, some of the houses of which had already caught fire from the enemy's shells, and drew off his troops to the neighbouring hill of Ednevady, with the view of concentrating them for a general attack on the British forces. The latter, meanwhile, entered the town (it was now late in the evening), and began plundering, burning, and drinking. As night advanced, all disci-

* The garrison of Portaferry was a yeomanry corps, of whose combative propensities the captain felt painfully sceptical. But he was determined that they should fight. While awaiting the approach of the assailants, he shut up his men in the market-house, ordered the captain of a revenue cruiser lying in the river to point his guns up the street down which he apprehended the reluctant military would make their retreat, and so rendered fighting the least of two evils. The result fully answered the captain's expectations. Between the pikemen on the one side, and the ship's guns on the other, they did valiantly.—See Teeling's "Personal Narrative," p. 246.

pline was forgotten; men and horses were scattered promiscuously through the streets, and the brutal intoxication of the victors offered the United army an easy opportunity of repairing the disaster of the day. What followed is thus related by Teeling:—

“The United troops rested on their arms. It was a night of deep interest and awful suspense. Monroe, ever on the alert, passed from rank to rank, cheering, encouraging, and relieving the wants of his companions.

“A friendly messenger from the town presented himself at the outposts, and was conveyed to head-quarters. He represented the disorganised state of the enemy—their unguarded situation—suggested the propriety of an immediate attack. A council of war was assembled: the voice of the people declared for instant action, the Commander-in-Chief alone opposed it. The discussion was warm and animated. The best spirit prevailed amongst the troops,—the proudest feelings had been roused by the bold exertions of the day, and those feelings had not yet subsided. The ammunition was insufficient for to-morrow, but ammunition was not wanting for a night-attack, for the pike and the bayonet were more efficient. To-morrow might reinforce the enemy's ranks—to-night everything favoured an attack, while fortune seemed to have placed an easy victory within their reach.

“Such were the arguments advanced; but the mind of Monroe was not to be changed, his resolution had been formed and remained immovable. ‘We scorn,’ said he, ‘to avail ourselves of the ungenerous advantage which night affords;—we will meet them in the blush of open day,—we will fight them like men; not under the cloud of night, but the first rays of to-morrow's sun.’ This determination was received with discontent by the troops, and many retired from the field. A division of nearly seven hundred men, and more generally armed with muskets than the rest, marched off in one body with their leader. Such was the romantic character of the man in whose hands was placed the destiny of thousands.

“On the morning of the 13th, at the first dawn, Monroe formed his men for action; and though their numbers had been sensibly diminished during the night, they betrayed no want of courage or confidence in their commander. He commenced the attack by a discharge from eight small pieces of ship cannon, which were drawn up against the town, and, under all circumstances, well served; these were promptly replied to by the heavy artillery of the enemy. A strong division marched from the hill, with the view of penetrating the town on the right; while Monroe headed in person a more formidable column, directing his march to the left. General Nugent dispatched a body of troops to contend the ground with the former, who waited their approach, drawn up in a solid square, and received them with a destructive fire, which checked their advance; but the officer commanding the British troops having fallen, his men gave way and hastily retreated into the town.

“The column led by Monroe consisted of the greater part of the disposable force which remained, and no men could have displayed greater courage and enthusiasm than they evinced in the advance. They bore down all opposition; forced an entrance into the town, under the most destructive fire of musketry and cannon, repeated rounds of grape-shot sweeping whole ranks, which were as rapidly replaced. A piece of heavy artillery fell

into the hands of the pikemen, who charged to the very muzzles of the guns.

"Monroe gained the centre of the town, where, exposed to a cross fire of musketry in the market-square, raked by the artillery, his ammunition exhausted, he pressed boldly on the enemy with the bayonet and the pike; the charge was irresistible, and the British General ordered a retreat. Here followed one of the most extraordinary scenes, unexampled perhaps in ancient or modern warfare. The United troops, unacquainted with the trumpet's note, and enveloped by the smoke, which prevented a distinct view of the hurried movements in the British line, mistook the sounded retreat for the signal of charge, and shrinking, as they conceived, from the advance of fresh numbers, fled with precipitation in a southerly direction from the town, while the British were as rapidly evacuating it on the north."*

The consequence of this unlucky blunder was an utter rout. A regiment of British Light Dragoons, which had hitherto borne no part in the conflict, charged the flying insurgents, and were joined by the infantry, who speedily recovered from their panic. Monroe made every effort to rally his men, and succeeded in regaining his former position on the hill of Ednevady. But the case was beyond a remedy. The enemy were rapidly encompassing him on all sides, and there was plainly no alternative between instant flight and total destruction. Numbers fell in the retreat, for "the British never gave quarter." The town was pillaged and burned by the twice victorious royalists; and, two days after the battle, Monroe was discovered, tried by court-martial, and executed in front of his own house."†

The rebellion in Ulster was now over. There was no recovering the reverses of Antrim and Ballynahinch: the army of the Union dispersed at once, and once for all. But the cessation of hostilities brought with it no mitigation of the people's sufferings. In the north, as in the south, the end of the rebellion was only the re-commencement of the tyranny that had provoked it, with enlarged and multiplied powers, inflamed passions, more plausible pretences, and full license of impunity. Ulster, defenceless and subdued, now experienced again all the rigour and insolence of military despotism. Vast numbers of victims were hourly dragged to prison, or hurried before military tribunals whose whole judicial morality was summed up in "not bearing the sword in vain." Informations were stimulated by bribery, and extorted by intimidation; and the doctrine of "misprision of treason" was put in force against those whom the claims of friendship or kindred prompted to give shelter to the proscribed fugitives from military vengeance. But we are weary of this sickening monotony of crime and woe, and forbear. What was done in Ulster under the restored military tyranny, may be sufficiently inferred from what was said by the agents of a government always, in such matters, superabundantly faithful to its word. Military law in Belfast ran thus:—

"Shall it be found hereafter that said traitor has been concealed by any person or persons, or by the knowledge or connivance of any person

* "Personal Narrative," pp. 254-257.

† Teeling adds—"Where his wife, his mother, and his sister resided. His head was severed from his body, and exhibited upon the market-house on a pike, so situated as to be the first and the last object daily before the eyes of his desolate family."

"or persons of this town and its neighbourhood, or that they or any of them have known the place of his concealment and shall not have given notice thereof to the commandant of this town, such person's house will be *burned*, and the owner thereof *hanged*."*

A proclamation of General Nugent's, about the same period, calling on the people to lay down their arms and deliver up their leaders, concludes with the following almost incredibly atrocious menace :—

"Should the above injunctions not be complied with within the time specified, Major-General Nugent will proceed to set fire to and totally destroy the towns of Killinchy, Killileagh, Ballynahinch, Saintfield, and every cottage and farm-house in the vicinity of those places; carry off the stock and cattle, and put every one to the sword who may be found in arms."†

The new reign of terror and cruelty, though sharp, was (in its worst features) of short duration. It was judged, by a power before which Orangeism itself must needs succumb, that Ireland had suffered enough. On the 20th of June a new Lord Lieutenant arrived in Dublin, the representative of a new policy. Marquis CORNWALLIS came with instructions from the British cabinet to stop the course of military executions, to repress or mitigate the excesses of military and magisterial ferocity, to

* Proclamation of Colonel Derham to the inhabitants of Belfast.

† The following specimen of a magisterial and military dispatch (given by Dr. Madden) is worth preserving. The writer was a British colonel, holding the commission of the peace, and commanding a large district in the north under General Nugent :—

"Newtownards, 20th June, 1798.

"DEAR SIR,—I have had tolerable success to-day in apprehending the persons mentioned in the memorandum. The list is as follows. [Here follows a list containing twenty-seven names.]

"We have burned Johnston's house at Crawford's-Bourn Mills; at Bangor, destroyed the furniture of Pat Agnew; James Francis, and Gibbison, and Campbell's *not finished yet*; at Ballyholme, burned the house of Johnston; at the Demesnes, near Bangor, the houses of Jas. Richardson and John Scott; at Ballymacconnell Mills, burned the house of M'Connell, miller, and James Martin, a captain and a friend of M'Culloch's, hanged at Ballynahinch.

"Groomsport, reserved.

"Cotton, the same.

"We hope you will think we have done *tolerably well*. To-morrow we go to Portaferry, or rather to its neighbourhood. Ought we not to punish the gentlemen of the country, who have never assisted the well-disposed people, yeomanry, &c.? For my own part, a gentleman of any kind, but more particularly a magistrate, who deserts his post at such a period, ought to be — I will not say what. * * *

"List of inactive magistrates, or rather friends of the United Irishmen :—

"Sir John Blackwood.

"John Crawford, of Crawford's-Burn.

"John Kennedy, Cultra, &c.

"But, among others, Rev. Hu. Montgomery, of Rosemount, who is no friend to government or to its measures, and whom I strongly suspect. I have got his bailiff. Believe me, dear sir,

"With the greatest respect and esteem,

"Your most faithful servant,

"L. ATHERTON.

"I am apt to suspect you are misinformed about Smith, the innkeeper, of Donaghadee. The newspaper account is entirely false. The fellow's fled. I will endeavour to know more about him. I wish for no *lawyers* here, *except as my clerks*."

give repose to the bleeding, gasping land, *and to extinguish the Irish nationality.* By the end of the month the rebellion was over, except where (as in Kildare and Wicklow) small bands of insurgents still held out for terms; and on the 29th, the first overture of peace was made in a viceregal proclamation, "Authorising his Majesty's generals to give protection to such insurgents as, being simply guilty of rebellion, should, within fourteen days, surrender their arms, desert their leaders, abjure all unlawful engagements, and take the oath of allegiance to the king."

CHAPTER XV.

PRISONERS AND CONVICTS—THE BROTHERS SHEARES—AMNESTY COMPACT—FORT GEORGE.

WHEN the general suppression of the rebellion gave the ministers leisure and breathing-time to resume the ordinary business of government, the first thing that occupied their attention was the disposal of the state prisoners, now including nearly every one of the United Irish leaders. The trials began with HENRY and JOHN SHEARES, whose case, as characteristically illustrative of the temper of the times, deserves to be given more at length than the purpose and limits of this history will allow with regard to the prosecutions which followed.

Henry and John Sheares were barristers by profession, gentlemen by birth and character; beloved and honoured in the sphere of society in which they moved, and of good repute for all the domestic and civic virtues. In temperament these brothers were totally unlike each other, though closely united in affection. The elder was fond of society, and fitted to shine in it; of an open, easy, pleasure-loving nature; luxurious in his habits, expensive and showy in his tastes; proud and impetuous in manner, but of a generous disposition; by nature a liberal, good-hearted aristocrat, though fond of talking about republicanism. John Sheares was a reading, thinking man; intense, earnest, and concentrated. He lived simply and cheaply, "bought nothing but books"—was, in his whole way of being and thinking, an enthusiastic republican.* The generous and just dispositions of the brothers made them political reformers; a visit to

* Dr. Madden (vol. ii., p. 118 *et seq.*) gives the following account of the brothers from the reminiscences of a lady recently deceased, of the name of Maria Steele; a name, he informs us, which "will be associated with that of John Sheares, as that of Amelia Curran is with Robert Emmet's."—

"Both the brothers had been United Irishmen more than a year when I first knew them, in 1794; and they attended the meetings of that society, as many others then did. A speech that was made at one of those meetings gave Lord Clare an opportunity of speaking disrespectfully of them in the House of Lords, the consequence of which was a demand for an explanation from the eldest. They had become United Irishmen at the same time; but there was nothing legally criminal in their proceedings till 1798. * * *

"Henry lived beyond his income; his affairs were somewhat embarrassed, and he sold a part of his property; he also borrowed a good deal from John, who at one time wished to reside apart from his brother, but could not on that account. He was successful at the bar, till the Chancellor became the enemy of the brothers. Lord Clare's

Paris in 1792, when they became acquainted with Roland, Brissot, and other men of the revolution, made them agitators. They came home, and joined the Dublin Society of United Irishmen, over whose meetings we

enmity was chiefly against Henry. John had no quarrel with him; but on their conviction, it is said, he could not be spared and Henry put to death. After Henry's correspondence with the Chancellor, he prevented them from doing business in his court as lawyers. John then became exasperated, and spoke more severely of him than he had done before, on account of his politics. He always thought him an enemy to Ireland. When I knew the brothers, in 1794, they had been at the bar some time, and lived together in Henry Sheares's house, in Bagot-street.

"Henry Sheares was naturally high-spirited, eloquent in discourse, and possessed of a remarkably martial and noble bearing; but his great *hauteur* and want of discretion would have made him a bad leader in any public cause. In his domestic relations he was warm, tender, indulgent; willing to promote every present amusement, but wanting calculation and foresight for the future. I have always heard he was a fair scholar; and have heard good judges say that they had never seen a library so admirably selected as that of the Sheares's. Henry was not considered so deeply read as John. He did not give so much time to study, but he never appeared deficient in company, either with the learned, or with those whose reading lay more amongst works of imagination and modern literature. He spoke with great fluency and elegance on literary subjects, but not without a degree of characteristic pride. His disposition was most generous; but he was not patient or forbearing. He would have made a good despot, if there can be such a thing. He spoke with much violence at times, even in society; but though haughty, and sometimes fierce, he was not of a cruel temper. He used to talk of republicanism, but he was formed for courts—he loved power, and splendour, and luxury. The self-denying virtues he knew not. He was, however, an accomplished gentleman, fond of society, and capable of adding lustre to the most brilliant circle. * * *

"When I first became acquainted with the brothers, in 1794, I heard that John was six-and-twenty, and Henry about five-and-thirty. The latter looked a great deal older than his brother. John was considered greatly superior to his brother in talents. My intimacy with him commenced in 1794; at that time he was in the habit of attending the meetings of the United Irishmen. He was a firm republican in his principles, but was a stranger to violence of any kind, till his mind was overwhelmed. His character seemed changed after Christmas, 1797; he was very desirous then to leave Ireland.

"In regard to the proclamation found in his desk, I believe he was the writer of it; though that was never fully proved. At the time when it was supposed to have been written, he appeared so altered, that those who used to delight in listening to him would scarce know him. His mind seemed to have lost its balance. Even his dress was not the same—his hair was neglected, &c. &c. In March, 1798, he became a member of the Directory, and then first took any active part in the rebellion. I do not think he desired a revolution, till at a very late period of the struggle. In becoming a United Irishman, his views were—like those of all the educated and honourable persons of the society—Catholic Emancipation and Parliamentary Reform. At first there were more Protestants than Roman Catholics engaged in it; and much more in the north than any other quarter of the kingdom;—it was latterly that it became a religious struggle. I might say that John Sheares was naturally inclined to republicanism; but he afterwards thought that Roman Catholics were not suited for republican institutions. He used to laugh at titles, and make little of grandeur; and, with respect to resistance, he thought no war justifiable but a defensive one. His characteristic qualities were benevolence and filial and fraternal affection—a love of his fellow-creatures, and an anxiety to befriend them. As a son, as a brother, as a friend, I have never seen him surpassed. * * *

"The brothers loved one another with extraordinary affection; and yet they were very different in their tastes and sentiments. Henry talked about republicanism, but John was an enthusiast in his attachment to it; all his habits of thinking tended that way. It suited the simplicity of his character, and the total absence of vanity that distinguished him; but he often said it would not do for Ireland.

"In his person he differed strikingly from his brother. His air was gentle and unassuming, but animated and interesting. You ask, was he of a sanguinary disposition? He was quite the reverse: he had a most tender heart, and benevolent disposition. While he was himself, he would not give pain of mind or body to anything that lived."

find them occasionally presiding in the course of the year 1793. It does not appear, however, that they carried agitation the length of conspiracy until 1798; when, on the arrests of the 12th of March, the Union was saved from the instant and utter disorganisation which menaced it, by John Sheares assuming the vacant directorate. Of his utter unfitness for the post—rash, boastful, garrulous as he was, at a time when not all the dissimulation of a Borgia and caution of a William the Silent could have saved the conspiracy from eventful wreck and ruin—we have already had a specimen.* It can occasion no surprise that such a conspirator fell an easy prey to the spy and informer. The history of his and his brother's betrayal, which we proceed to give as it appeared in evidence on their trial, is an apt and compendious illustration of the morality of the Clare and Castlereagh government and the agents whom it employed and patronised, and at the same time most instructively shows the inherent weakness and peril of secrecy in political organisation.

On the 10th of May, Captain JOHN WARNEFORD ARMSTRONG,† of the King's County Militia, then stationed with a company of his regiment at Le-haunstown (or Loughlinstown) camp, near the metropolis, came into Dublin, and made an apparently casual call at the shop of a Mr. Byrne, a bookseller, in Grafton Street. This Byrne was a United Irishman of high standing in the society, dealt largely in ultra-liberal publications, both political and theological, and his establishment was a kind of literary headquarters, or general gossip-mart, for the patriot leaders. Armstrong was well known to Byrne—at least, so the latter thought. He had been a regular customer and constant visitor at the shop almost every day for two years, and was a diligent purchaser of "every political pamphlet as it came out, and other books he fancied." His "fancies" were very liberal and comprehensive, extending to the "Rights of Man" and the "Age of Reason." In the course of conversation on this 10th of May, a wish was expressed by the one, and reciprocated by the other, that Byrne should take an early opportunity of introducing Armstrong to the brothers Sheares.‡

Immediately on leaving Byrne's, Armstrong went to his brother-officer and particular friend, Captain Clibborn, informed him of what had passed, and asked his advice. Clibborn's advice was that the offer of an introduction to the brothers should be accepted. Armstrong lost no time; he returned to Byrne's that same day, and remained there till Henry Sheares arrived. The introduction then took place. Byrne opened a door leading into a private room behind his shop, presuming that the new friends might "have a mind to chat," and smoothed the way to confidential intercourse with—"All I can say to you, Mr. Sheares, is that Captain Armstrong is a *true brother*, and you may depend upon him."

Henry Sheares, however, had not "a mind to chat." He met the Captain's overtures with the answer, that "what he wanted to say he wished to say in the presence of his brother." Armstrong obligingly replied, that "he had no objection to wait till his brother came." But Sheares declined

* See page 152.

† We learn from Dr. Madden (vol. ii., p. 113) that this gentleman is still living, "and has long been distinguished for his zeal and activity in the magisterial office."

‡ In his direct examination, Armstrong makes it appear that the introduction was proposed by Byrne. His cross-examination on this point elicited the significant answer—"I do not know with whom the wish originated."

waiting, and left the shop. Shortly afterwards John Sheares arrived, and the ceremony of introduction was repeated, "pretty much in the same manner as before." The following conversation was then held in the inner room, with closed doors (we quote from Ridgeway's Report of the Trial):—

"John said, *he knew my principles very well*; that he was emboldened by that knowledge, and the pressure of events induced him, for the good of the cause, to make himself known to me, and to show me how the cause could be benefited by my joining the cause in action, as he knew I had by inclination. *I told him, I was ready to do everything in my power for it.*

"Meaning the cause?—Yes; and that *if he would show me how I could do anything, I would serve him to the utmost of my power.*

"Did he state to you in what manner you could serve this cause to which he thus alluded?—He said, that as I was willing to serve it, he would tell me at once what I could do. He told me that the rising was very near; that they could not wait for the French, but had determined upon a home exertion; and that the principal manner in which I could assist them was by seducing the soldiers, and bringing about the King's County Militia; and consulting with him about taking the camp.

"*Court*: What camp?—The camp at Lehaunstown, I understood, where I was quartered. And that, for the purpose of bringing about the soldiers, he would recommend me to endeavour to practise upon the non-commissioned officers and privates, who were of the Roman Catholic religion, as they were most likely to think themselves aggrieved. I do not recollect anything more of the conversation that day, except our appointment to meet the Sunday following."*

The appointment was faithfully kept on the Captain's part. On the morning of Sunday, the 13th of May, he went to the Sheares's house in Bagot Street. Henry only was at home. The suspicions of the latter had, it would seem, by this time been removed: he apologised to Armstrong for having so abruptly left him on the occasion of their first meeting, "for that there was a committee sitting, which it was necessary that either he or his brother should attend." A confidential conversation then ensued. "He asked me as to the state of the regiment, and the situation of the camp; where it was most vulnerable, and the number of troops stationed there. He questioned me as to the possibility of taking it by storm, or by treachery, or by using the counter-sign, or something of that kind." Presently, the younger brother came in, and these perilous confidences were carried still further. John Sheares informed Armstrong that "it was their intention to seize the camp, the artillery at Chapelizod, and the city of Dublin, in one night; there was to be one hour and a half between the seizing of the camp and Dublin, and an hour between seizing Dublin and Chapelizod, so that the news of both might arrive at the same time." He spoke of the importance of gaining over the soldiers, and solicited Armstrong's services with the men of the King's County regiment. The informer's reply was—"He should be afraid to commit himself with any of

* Howell's "Collection of State Trials," vol. xxvii.

them; but if he knew them, he should then do what he could in concert with them." Another appointment was made, and another interview was held late that night, for the purpose of giving Armstrong the names of some men in his regiment whose co-operation might be depended on.

The Captain was indefatigable in his attentions to his new friends. Twice on the Wednesday following, twice again on the Thursday, he repeated his visits in Bagot-street, returning in the intervals to Lehaunstown camp, communicating everything that passed to Colonel L'Estrange and Captain Clibborn—sometimes to Lord Castlereagh and Mr. Cooke—and taking their instructions as to his further proceedings.* On Sunday, the 20th, he paid his final visit to the brothers; obtained full particulars as to the plan of the Dublin rising, the intended seizure of the Lord Lieutenant and Privy Council, &c.; received a promise from the Executive Directory of a colonelcy in the rebel army; and was considerably "recommended" by Henry Sheares "*to be cautious; for that he and his brother had escaped by their caution, for government then thought them inactive.*"† The next morning the brothers were arrested, and lodged in Kilmainham gaol.

Even yet the informer was not quite satisfied; nor was the faith of his victims shaken. "Other informers," says the biographer of the United Irishmen, "when they have once wormed themselves into the confidence of their victims, and have possessed themselves sufficiently of their secrets to bring them to the scaffold, rest from their labours, and spare themselves the unnecessary annoyance, perhaps a feeling of remorse, at beholding the unfortunate wretches they have deceived, when they are fairly in their toils and delivered over to the proper authorities. In Ireland, there is no such squeamishness in the breasts of our informers." A few hours after the arrest, John Sheares received, in the Castle guard-room, *a visit of friendship and condolence* from his betrayer. The prisoner asked "if his brother was taken;" to which Armstrong replied, "I do not know." He anxiously inquired "if his papers were seized," and was again answered, "I do not know." Sheares said "he hoped not, for there was one among them that would commit him."

The dangerous paper here alluded to, which was much relied on by the crown at the trial as an overt act of treason, was a certain proclamation, designed for use in the anticipated event of the insurrection proving successful. It was, without question, a violent and infuriated production; breathing out threatenings and slaughter, war and vengeance, at a most vehement rate, against the oppressors of Ireland. We may best characterise it by saying, that its words are almost as sanguinary and vindictive as the every-day deeds of the detestable government which was making wise men mad, and good men savage. This document was found, in a scrawled and unfinished state, in John Sheares's writing desk. It was in his handwriting; and not a particle of proof was adduced, direct or circumstantial,

* He says, in his evidence—"I never had an interview with the Messrs. Sheares that I had not one with Colonel L'Estrange and Captain Clibborn, and my Lord Castlereagh."

† "Captain Armstrong did not think it necessary to state, that at his Sunday's interview he shared the hospitality of his victims; that he dined with them, sat in the company of their aged mother and affectionate sister, enjoyed the society of the accomplished wife of one of them, caressed his infant children; and on another occasion (referred to by Miss Steele) was entertained with music, the wife of the unfortunate man, whose children he was to leave in a few days fatherless, playing on the harp for his entertainment!"—Madden.

to connect his brother with it; there is, in fact, every reason to believe that Henry Sheares had never seen it, and was altogether ignorant of its existence.*

* See, on this point, the evidence of Mr. Alderman Alexander, the magistrate who arrested the brothers. John Sheares, while fully prepared for his own fate, seems never to have doubted of the acquittal of his brother. Had they been tried separately, instead of together, the result, as regarded Henry, might have been different.

We subjoin the document in question, as it was produced in evidence on the trial. The words in italics were interlined; those between crotchets were struck across with a pen:—

"IRISHMEN,—["Your country is free; all those Monsters who usurped Its Government to oppress its people are in our hands, except such as have]"

"Your country is free, and you are about to be avenged [already] that Vile Government which has so long and so cruelly oppressed you, is no more; some of its most Atrocious Monsters have already paid the forfeit of their Lives, and the rest are in our hands [waiting their fate.] The National Flag, *the Sacred Green*, is at this Moment flying over the Ruins of Despotism, and that Capital which, a few hours past [was the Scene] Witnessed the Debauchery, the [Machinations] plots and Crimes of your Tyrants, is now the Citadel of Triumphant Patriotism and *Virtue*. Arise then, United Sons of Ireland; arise like a great and powerful people, Determined to [live] be free or die. Arm Yourself by every means in your power, and Rush like Lions on your Foes; Consider that, [in Disarming your Enemy] for every Enemy you disarm, you arm a friend, and thus become doubly powerful; In the Cause of Liberty, inaction is Cowardice, and the Coward shall forfeit the property he has not the Courage to protect; Let his Arms be Seized and Transferred to those Gallant [Patriots] *Spirits* who want, and will use them; Yes, Irishmen, we swear by that eternal Justice, in whose Cause you fight, that the brave Patriot, who survives the present glorious Struggle, and the family of him who has fallen, or shall fall hereafter in it, shall Receive from the hands of a grateful Nation, an ample recompence out of [those funds] that property which the Crimes of our Enemies [shall] have Forfeited into its hands, and his Name [too] shall be Inscribed on the National Record of Irish Revolution, as a glorious Example to all posterity. *But we likewise swear to punish Robbery with death and Infamy.*

"We also swear, that we will never Sheathe the Sword until every [person] being in the Country is restored to those equal Rights, which the God of Nature has given to all men, Until an Order of things shall be established, in which no Superiority shall be acknowledged among the Citizens of Erin, but that [which] of Virtue and Talent [shall Intitle to].

["As for those degenerate Wretches who turn their swords against their Native Country, the National Vengeance awaits them: Let them find no quarter, unless they shall prove their Repentance by *speedily* deserting, Exchanging from the Standard of Slavery, for that of Freedom, under which their former errors may be buried, and they may Share the Glory and advantages that are due to the Patriot Bands of Ireland].

"Many of the Military feel the love of Liberty glow within their Breasts, and have [already to] joined the National Standard; receive [those] with open Arms, such as shall follow so so glorious an Example, they can render Signal Service to the Cause of freedom, and shall be rewarded according to their deserts: But for the Wretch who turns his Sword against his Native Country, let the National Vengeance be visited upon him, let him find no Quarter, Two other Crimes demand—

"Rouse all the Energies of your Souls; call forth *all* the Merit and abilities which a Vicious Government Consigned to obscurity, and under the Conduct of your Chosen Leaders March with a Steady Step to Victory; heed not the Glare of [a Mercenary] hired Soldiery, or *Aristocratic Yeomanry*, they cannot stand the Vigorous Shock of Freemen [close with them Man to Man; and let them see what Vigour the cause of Freedom can.] Their Trappings and their arms will soon be yours, and the Detested Government of England to which we Vow eternal hatred, shall learn, that the Treasures [she, it] *they* Exhausts on [their mercenary] its accoutred Slaves for the purpose of Butchering Irishmen, shall but further enable us to turn their Swords on its devoted head.

"Attack them in every direction by day and by night: avail yourselves of the Natural Advantages of your country, which are Innumerable, and *with which you are better acquainted than they*; Where you Cannot Oppose them in full force, Constantly

The trial took place on the 12th of July, the chief evidence against the prisoners being Captain Armstrong's revelations, and John Sheares's proclamation. The case was opened by the Attorney-General TOLER (afterwards the punning Lord Norbury)—a man after Lord Chancellor Clare's own heart, specially appointed for the occasion—in a speech which, for licence of insinuation, and mis-statement, and virulence of invective, has no parallel in English juridical history since the seventeenth century. He “thanked God that he lived to address that venerable bench and that upright jury,” leaving it to the terror-struck fancies of the jurors to “conjecture whether it was likely he should have done so under all the circumstances, if such calumniators had governed.” And of the proclamation, he eloquently asks—“Who is there that can read this bloody scroll, and not pronounce judgment upon the intention and imagination of the heart which composed it? And whilst I thus behold it, methinks I have in full and palpable form before me the sanguinary author penning it, with his bloody dagger in one hand, and pointing in triumph to the revolutionary tribunal and guillotine with the other.” How the sanguinary author could perform so many functions simultaneously, with only one pair of hands, this eloquent Irish Attorney-General omits to explain. Toler had probably something else in “full and palpable form” before him. He knew that he could not better recommend himself to his patron, than by remembering that one of the prisoners had crossed Mr. Fitzgibbon in love sixteen years before.

The result of the trial scarcely needs to be told: but some of the circumstances of it deserve to be kept in historic memory. The Captain, fresh from his military exploits in the Wicklow mountains—where he had been busy, a few weeks before, whipping, shooting, and hanging peasants at discretion—gave his evidence with all the confidence of a man conscious of having deserved well of his king and country. It was in vain that the prisoner's counsel attempted to damage and discredit his testimony, by bringing some of his near relations and most intimate friends to swear that they had repeatedly heard him talk atheism in theology and treason in politics, deride the obligation of an oath, and intimate the pleasure he would feel in executing the last sentence of the law on the person of his Majesty King George III.* The Captain's confession of faith, that

harass their Rear and their flanks; cut off their provisions and Magazines and prevent them as much as possible from Uniting their forces; let whatever Moments you Cannot [pass in] Devote to fighting for your Country, be [Devoted to] passed in learning how to fight for it, or preparing the means of War, for War, War alone must occupy every mind and every hand in Ireland, until its long oppressed Soil be purged of all its enemies.

“Vengeance, Irishmen, Vengeance on Your Oppressors—Remember what thousands of your dearest friends have perished by their [Murders, Cruel plots] *Merciless Orders*; Remember their burnings, their rackings, their torturings, their Military Massacres, and their legal Murders. Remember ORR.”

* We extract the following from the evidence of his cousin, Mr. Thomas Drought:—

“Do you know Captain John Warneford Armstrong?—I know Captain John Warneford Armstrong.

“Have you known him long?—From his infancy.

“In what county do you reside?—In the King's County for some years past.

“Is it your place of birth?—No, sir; I was born in the Queen's County.

“Have you been intimate with Captain Armstrong?—Very much so, while he was in Ireland, and while I was here; for I lived in England several years myself.

“Do you recollect to have heard him express any particular opinion that he enter-

day, came up to the standard of juridical orthodoxy ; and a wound recently received in the public service, sufficiently redeemed his character for loyalty.

tained, with respect to the existence of God, or a future existence of the soul ?—I have frequently heard him utter atheistical opinions.

“ What opinions do you call atheistical ?—A disbelief of a supreme intelligent Being.

“ Have you heard him express any opinion of the existence of the soul of man ?—I have ; perfect annihilation.

“ After what you have mentioned, it may be called an Irish question ; but can you mention what his notion was of rewards and punishments, of the state of the soul after annihilation ?—I do not know, but he said it was eternal sleep : non-existence.

“ Have you heard him express these kind of opinions with apparent seriousness and deliberation ?—As if they were his real sentiments ; I have heard him mention them at breakfast.

“ Did it seem, or did he utter them as a kind of idle rant, as if he thought it an idle thing, or did he utter them as his proper sentiments ?—With his usual calmness, not with more levity than usual.

“ Do you mean to say that this happened more than once ?—It happened generally when I had an opportunity of talking with him upon that subject.

“ Do you recollect having passed by his lodging in Grafton-street since the unfortunate expedition of Colonel Walpole ?—I do recollect to have passed from Stephen’s-green to Grafton-street about five o’clock in the evening of Friday, the 29th of June. He was ridiculing the idea of Papists fasting upon that day ; that makes me remember it was Friday.

“ How came you to his lodgings ?—I heard a person call out, ‘ Holloa ! ’ I saw a person beckon at the window. I knocked at the door, and was received by him up-stairs.

“ What conversation ensued ?—The conversation principally concerned the engagement, and the wound he had received : we had some discourse respecting the number of people killed upon each side.

“ Do you recollect anything respecting *two or three peasants* ?—Yes ; after talking of the number of people killed, I inquired as to those killed on the other side, whether they were all killed in the field, and with arms in their hands ? He said there were two or three caught at a distance ; that one was hanged in consequence of having refused to give information ; another, I believe, was suspended, and Captain Armstrong said he cut him down ; but one was hanged outright : and we both agreed that it was not a good way to make him confess ; and that upon his suggestion, the fellow that was suspended—or had the rope about his neck, I am not sure which—was ordered to receive twenty-five lashes, and when he received eight, he called out with vociferation that he would give information ; that he then led them on, and said the person who was hanged could have given the same information, though he suffered himself to be hanged. I asked him how he could possibly reconcile it to himself to deprive those wretches of life, without even the form of trial ? He acknowledged that they did so. I asked him whether he expected any punishment for it, and though he did not expect it from government, yet that there was an All-powerful Being, who would punish him. He said, ‘ *You know my opinion long ago upon this subject.* ’ ”

Armstrong’s own account of this affair, in cross-examination, was as follows :—

“ One was to be hanged, the other was to be flogged. We were going up Blackmore Hill, under Sir James Duff ; there was a party of rebels there. We met three men with green cockades. One we shot, another we hanged, and the third we flogged and made a guide of.

“ Which did you make the guide of ?—The one that was neither shot nor hanged.”

He had no recollection of the rest of the conversation reported by Mr. Drought.

Lieutenant Sherrington, of the 41st regiment, deposed, on the trial, that “ he was nephew, by marriage, of Captain Armstrong, and had known him since his childhood. When in Lord Cork’s regiment, in England, had conversations with him. Did not think his principles exactly such as a military man’s should be. Had a conversation with him at his agent’s, Mr. Mulholland. Talked of various things—the French Revolution—and he said he did not wish for kingly government. He said, that if there was not another executioner in the kingdom for George III. but himself, he would be one, and pique himself upon being so. I told him he was a d—d fellow, and ought to give up his commission and leave the army, and go over to France.”

It was past midnight when the examination of the witnesses closed. Worn to utter exhaustion by the fatigue of a fifteen-hours' sitting, Curran protested to the Court that he was "unequal to the duty" of defending the prisoners, and implored "a few hours' interval for repose, or rather for recollection." The few hours' interval was *refused*. The Court consulted the Attorney-General, and the Attorney-General "felt such public inconvenience from adjourning cases of that kind, that he could not consent." He added that "great concessions" had been made to the prisoners already.

The trial went on. "The surviving spectators of this memorable scene," says the son and biographer of the advocate, "speak of it as marked by indescribable solemnity. The fate that impended over the unfortunate brothers—the perturbed state of Ireland—the religious influence of the hour—the throng of visages in the galleries, some of them disfigured by poverty, others betraying by their impassioned expression a consciousness of participation in the offence for which the accused were about to suffer, and all of them rendered haggard and spectral by the dim lights that discovered them: the very presence of those midnight lights so associated in Irish minds with images of death,*—everything combined to inspire the beholders, who were now enfeebled by exhaustion, with a superstitious awe, and to make the objects, amidst which the advocate rose to perform the last offices to his sinking clients, appear not so much a reality, as the picture of a strained and disturbed imagination."†

Between seven and eight o'clock the next morning, after sitting for nearly twenty-three hours continuously, the jury retired for seventeen minutes, and found a verdict of GUILTY against both the prisoners. As soon as it was pronounced, the brothers clasped each other in their arms.

At three o'clock in the afternoon the Court sat again. The prisoners were placed at the bar; the clerk of the crown read the indictment, and asked them "what they had to say why judgment of death and execution should not be awarded against them according to law?"

Henry Sheares spoke first:—"My lord, as I had no notion of dying such a death as I am about to meet, I have only to ask your lordship for sufficient time to prepare myself and my family for it. I have a wife and six children, and hope your humanity will allow me some reasonable time to settle my affairs, and make a provision for them." Here he was so overwhelmed with tears, that he could not proceed.

John Sheares then addressed the Court. He had no favour to ask for himself:—"My country has decided that I am guilty; and the law says that I shall suffer: it sees that I am ready to suffer. "But, my lords, I have a favour to request of the Court that does not relate to myself. My lords, I have a brother, whom I have ever loved dearer than myself; but it is not from any affection for him alone that I am induced to make the request;—he is a man, and therefore, I hope, prepared to die, if he stood as I do—though I do not stand unconnected;—but he stands more dearly connected. In short, my lords, to spare your feelings and my own, I do not pray that I should not die; but that the husband, the father, the brother, and the son, all comprised in one person,

* Midnight sittings were not unusual in the Irish state trials of this period.

† "Life of Curran," by his Son, vol. ii., p. 17.

holding these relations, dearer in life to him than any other man I know ;— for such a man I do not pray a pardon, for that is not in the power of the Court ; but I pray a respite for such time as the Court, in its humanity and discretion, shall think proper. You have heard, my lords, that his private affairs require arrangement. I have a farther room for asking it. If immediately both of us be taken off, an aged and revered mother, a dear sister, and the most affectionate wife that ever lived, and six children, will be left without protection or provision of any kind. When I address myself to your lordships, it is with the knowledge you will have of all the sons of our aged mother being gone. Two have perished in the service of the king—one very recently. I only request that, disposing of me with what swiftness either the public mind or justice requires, a respite may be given to my brother, that the family may acquire strength to bear it all. That is all I wish. I shall remember it to my last breath ; and I will offer up my prayers for you to that Being who has endued us all with sensibility to feel. This is all I ask. I have nothing more to say.”

This manly and touching appeal was met by the Attorney-General with a prayer “ that *execution may be done upon the prisoners to-morrow* :” to which the Court responded, *BE IT SO*—and it was so.

In conformity with the almost incredibly cruel custom of that cruel time, no member of their family was allowed to see them.

The trial of the Sheareses was followed by that of JOHN M'CANN, on the 17th of July ; of WILLIAM MICHAEL BYRNE, on the 20th (these were two of the Leinster delegates arrested on the 12th of March) ; and of OLIVER BOND, on the 23rd.* They were severally convicted of high treason, on the evidence chiefly of Thomas Reynolds. Notwithstanding the condition on which Reynolds gave his evidence,† M'Cann was executed two days after the trial. Whether Reynolds indignantly protested against the execution, as a breach of faith, we know not ; but, in point of fact, the executions did not go on, the trials did not go on. Byrne and Bond were respited ; and negotiations were commenced between govern-

* It is worth recording, as characteristic of the times, that on Bond's trial Curran was repeatedly interrupted in his defence of the prisoner, and obliged to sit down, by bursts of tumultuous menace from the auditory. We find the following in Howell's “ State Trials :”—

“ ‘ Gentlemen of the jury—Much pains has been taken to warm you, and then you are entreated to be cool ; when the fire has been kindled, it has been spoken to, and prayed to be extinguished. WHAT IS THAT ? [Here Mr. Curran was again interrupted by the tumult of the auditors ; it was the third time that he had been obliged to sit down : on rising, he continued,] I have very little, scarce any hope of being able to discharge my duty to my unfortunate client—perhaps most unfortunate in having me for his advocate. I know not whether to impute these inhuman interruptions to mere accident ; but I greatly fear they have been excited by prejudice.’ ”

“ [The Court said they would punish any person who dared to interrupt the counsel for the prisoner. ‘ Pray, Mr. Curran, proceed on stating your case : we will take care, with the blessing of God, that you shall not be interrupted.’] ”

The interruption was occasioned, we are told by the advocate's biographer, by “ a clash of arms among the military that thronged the court : some of those who were nearest to him appeared, from their looks and gestures, about to offer him personal violence, upon which, fixing his eye sternly upon them, he exclaimed, ‘ You may assassinate, but you shall not intimidate me.’ ”—“ Life,” vol ii., p. 66.

Curran often received in court anonymous letters, threatening his life should he utter a syllable calculated to bring discredit on the government and its measures.

† See page 152, note.

ment and the prisoners, by which (with one exception most disgraceful to the government) the further effusion of blood on the scaffold was spared.

With whom the idea of this negotiation originated does not clearly appear. It was practically carried into effect by the exertions of Mr. Francis Dobbs, a liberal member of the Irish parliament and an old major of Volunteers, who, about the 22nd of July, undertook the office of mediator between the government and the prisoners. Both parties had, in truth, a common interest in coming to terms. As regarded the prisoners—the insurrection was at an end; the cause and objects of the Union were utterly and hopelessly defeated; no possible public good could result from the rejection of conditions not absolutely dishonourable. On the side of the government, nothing was to be gained by going on with the trials and executions, while the disclosures likely to be elicited under an amnesty-compact would have a valuable political use with the British parliament and people, as justificatory of the coercive system of the preceding years. The new Lord Lieutenant was not a man of blood, either by temper or policy; his mission was amnesty, conciliation, and the Legislative Union. Castlereagh himself was not vindictive; his thoughts ran less on cruelty for cruelty's sake, than on “strengthening the hands of government.” Lord Chancellor Clare was left alone in the opinion that every United Irishman ought to be hanged.* The consequence of this state of things was that, after a week of hesitation and delay on the part of the prisoners, who were required to be unanimous, and of evasion, higgling, and crue ltrickery on the part of ministers—during which they *executed Byrne* by way of expediting the business, *and then raised their terms*—the following compact was agreed on, signed by seventy-three prisoners, and accepted by the government:—

“THAT the undersigned state prisoners, in the three prisons of Newgate, Kilmainham, and Bridewell, engage to give every information in their power of the whole of the internal transactions of the United Irishmen; and that each of them shall give detailed information of every thing that has passed between the United Irishmen and foreign states; but that the prisoners are not, by naming or describing, to implicate any person whatever; and that they are ready to emigrate to such country as shall be agreed upon between them and Government, and give security not to return to this country without the permission of Government, and not to pass into any enemy's country, if, on so doing, they are to be freed from prosecution; and also Mr. Bond be permitted to take the benefit of this proposal. The state prisoners also hope that it may be extended to such persons in custody, or not in custody, as may choose to benefit by it.

“*Dublin, 29th July, 1798.*”

“The last clause,” says Neilson, in his Narrative of this affair, “which is in fact, the *spirit* of the agreement, was intentionally worded in this loose manner at the instance of government, to save appearances on their

* “The Chancellor affirmed that *constructive treason was law*; and that, if his advice had been followed, every member of the Union would have been prosecuted for treason; to which I replied that he must have prosecuted the people of Ireland to extermination, as nearly the whole population was of the Union against which he was to draw his bill of indictment; a fact from which neither you nor the Chancellor could withhold your assent.”—ARTHUR. O'CONNOR'S *Letter to Lord Castlereagh*.

side ; for it was particularly and expressly conditioned and settled that government was pledged to this point ; and upon its being desired to have the particular expression more precise, the Chancellor said, '*It comes to this : either you must trust us, or we must trust you. A government which could violate engagements thus solemnly made, neither could stand, nor deserved to stand.*' Lord Castlereagh and Mr. Cooke concurred, and declared in the strongest manner that the whole of what had been agreed upon should be adhered to with the utmost liberality and good faith on the part of government."*

Thomas Addis Emmet gives the same account of this transaction :—

"In no part of this paper were details or perfect accuracy deemed necessary, because the ministers, and particularly Lord Castlereagh, frequently and solemnly declared that it should in every part be construed by government with the utmost liberality and good faith ; and particularly the last clause was worded in this loose manner, to comply with the express desire of the ministers, who insisted upon retaining to government the entire popularity of the measure ; but it was clearly and expressly understood, and positively engaged, that every leading man not guilty of deliberate murder should be included in the agreement, who should choose to avail himself of it, in as full and ample a manner as the contracting parties themselves, and that there should be a general amnesty, with the same exceptions, for the body of the people."†

Emmet thus explains the views and objects of the United Irish leaders in this negotiation :—

"We entered into this agreement the more readily, because it appeared to us that by it the public cause lost nothing. We knew, from the different examinations of the state prisoners before the Privy Council, and from conversations with ministers, that government was already in possession of all the important knowledge which they could obtain from us. From whence they derived their information was not entirely known to us ; but it is now manifest that Reynolds, Maguan, and Hughes, not to speak of the minor informers, had put them in possession of every material fact respecting the internal state of the Union ; and it was from particular cir-

* The whole of Neilson's "Narrative of Facts," given by Dr. Madden (Second Series, vol. i., p. 153 *et seq.*) will repay perusal.

† See Madden, Second Series, vol. ii. p. 101.

The promise of a "general amnesty" was afterwards kept, with the usual Punic faith of the Clare-and-Castlereagh government, by an act granting his Majesty's pardon for all acts of treason and sedition committed up to the 22nd of August, 1798, upon condition of banishment, or such terms as his Majesty might think fit to impose—EXCEPT all persons guilty of murder ; all persons who had been in custody between the 1st of January, 1795, and the passing of the said act, under any charge of treason, or suspicion of treason ; all persons who had held commissions, or been engaged in his Majesty's service, and had joined in the rebellion ; all persons concerned in, or consenting to, any design for procuring the invasion of the realm ; all members of treasonable committees called National, Executive, Provincial, or County Committees of United Irishmen ; all persons who had acted as generals, adjutant-generals, colonels, lieutenant-colonels, majors, or captains in the rebel forces ; all persons in any wise concerned in the rebellion, who should not deliver up their arms in such manner as appointed by the chief governor ; all persons attainted of high treason during the present session of parliament ; all persons convicted by court-martial since the 24th of May, 1798, of rebellious practices ; and also thirty-two persons named therein, fugitives from justice, charged with treason. It would have saved words to have said at once, *except nine-tenths of the people.*

cumstances well known to one of us, and entirely believed by the rest, that its external relations had been betrayed to the English Cabinet through the agency of a foreigner with whom we negotiated.

"This was even so little disguised, that, on the preceding 12th of March, the contents of a memoir, which had been prepared by one of the undersigned at Hamburg, and transmitted thence to Paris, were minutely detailed to him by Mr. Cooke. Nevertheless, those with whom we negotiated seemed extremely anxious for our communications. Their reasons for this anxiety may have been many, but two particularly suggested themselves to our minds: they obviously wished to give proof to the enemies of an Irish republic, and of Irish independence, of the facts with which they were themselves well acquainted, while, at the same time, they concealed from the world their real sources of intelligence. Nor do we believe we are uncharitable in attributing to them the hope and wish of rendering unpopular and suspected men in whom the United Irishmen had been accustomed to place an almost unbounded confidence. The injurious consequences of government succeeding in both these objects were merely personal; and as they were no more, though they were revolting and hateful to the last degree, we did not hesitate to devote ourselves that we might make terms for our country.

"What were these terms? That it should be rescued from civil and military executions; that a truce should be obtained for liberty, which she so much required. There was also another strongly-impelling motive for entering into this agreement. If government, on the one hand, was desirous of alarming its dependents by a display of the vigorous and well-concerted measures that were taken for subverting its authority, and shaking off the English yoke, so we, on the other hand, were not less solicitous for the vindication of our cause in the eyes of the liberal, the enlightened, and patriotic. We perceived that, in making a fair and candid development of those measures, we should be enabled boldly to avow and justify the cause of the Irish Union, as being founded upon the purest principles of benevolence, and as aiming only at the liberation of Ireland."

In the evening of the day on which the compact was finally concluded, Lord Castlereagh told O'Connor, Emmet, and Macneven, that he expected them to draw up and present in writing a detailed account of the rise, progress, and proceedings of the United Irishmen, including their negotiations with foreign states; and that such account would be considered by the government as a full accomplishment of their part of the conditions. This was the occasion of their very curious and valuable "Memoir of the Origin and Progress of the Irish Union," which was handed in to the ministers on the 4th of August. This performance of the compact, though acknowledged to be "perfect," was, however, far from satisfactory. Two days afterwards, Mr. Cooke called on the prisoners at Kilmainham, and told them that "Lord Cornwallis had read the Memoir; but, as it was a vindication of the Union, and a condemnation of the ministers, the government, and the legislature of Ireland, he could not receive it, and therefore he wished they would alter it." They declared "they would not change one letter; it was all true, and it was the truth they stood pledged to deliver."*

* See O'Connor's Letter to Lord Castlereagh.

Ministerial ingenuity eventually surmounted the difficulty, by suppressing the memoir (which was afterwards published by its authors), and extracting from the prisoners so much of its contents as might serve ministerial uses, by examining them before Secret Committees of the two Houses.

The prisoners having now honourably fulfilled their part of the agreement, as Mr. Cooke expressly and formally acknowledged on the 18th of August,* it was time for the government to make good its promise of "utmost liberality and good faith." But the liberality and good faith were not forthcoming. Repeated and urgent applications from the seventy-three, for leave to emigrate according to the compact, were studiously evaded. Ministers claimed the right of detaining them *until a general peace*, forgetting that the very words of the compact—"not to pass into an enemy's country"—implied their release during the war. The government press teemed with insolent and cruel misrepresentations of the evidence given by the leaders of the Union before the Secret Committees; which misrepresentations the prisoners (though they had verbally stipulated for full liberty of publication) were not allowed to answer. On the first attempt of O'Connor, Emmet, and Macneven to repel these newspaper slanders by a public advertisement,† they were put into solitary confinement. Early in September, a Banishment and Pardon Act was introduced into parliament, by way of fulfilling the ministerial part of the agreement, with a lying and insulting preamble, stating that the prisoners had *acknowledged their crimes, retracted their opinions, and implored pardon*. An attempt of Neilson to set the public right on these points, by a letter to the London *Courier* (laid before Lord Castlereagh previously to its being dispatched), brought an angry visit from Mr. Cooke, the result of which is thus stated by Neilson:—

" 'Then,' said Mr. Cooke, 'you are determined to publish?' I told him, 'I was.' 'I am to inform you, then, that I am desired by his Excellency the Lord Lieutenant to say that your doing so will be considered as a breach of the contract, *and the executions will go on as formerly!*' 'Why, sir, as to executions, I have my mind made up; I would rather suffer a thousand deaths than permit such a false statement to be thus solemnly recorded.' '*Do you know, sir,*' said he, in a menacing tone, '*that we can execute you without much difficulty?*' 'I do, sir; I know your will is law, and, to save you trouble, I would prefer you giving orders to Gregg (the gaoler), this instant to hang me out of the door, than acquiesce in such an abominable measure.' 'Oh! sir, I see what offends

* Ibid.

† This advertisement was as follows:—

"Having read in the different newspapers publications pretending to be abstracts of the Report of the Secret Committee of the House of Commons, and of our depositions before the committees of Lords and Commons; we feel ourselves called upon to assure the public that they are gross, and, to us, astonishing misrepresentations, not only unsupported by, but in many instances directly contradictory to, the facts we really stated on these occasions. We further assure our friends, that in no instance did the name of any individual escape from us: on the contrary, we always refused answering such questions as might tend to implicate any persons whatever, conformably to the agreement entered into by the state prisoners with government.

"ARTHUR O'CONNOR,

"THOS. ADDIS EMMET.

"WILLIAM JAMES MACNEVEN."

you : you are anxious for the reputation of the prisoners. Now, your mind may be, and I suppose is, made up ; but are you sure that all your fellow-prisoners are equally determined ?' ' I cannot say, nor is it material ; for *they* can by no means be implicated in this act of mine.' ' Indeed, they are ; and I assure you, if you publish a syllable on the subject, it will equally affect them all.' ' Then I beg you may permit my fellow-prisoners in this place to be present at the conclusion of this interview ?' ' No,' replied he (in terms of disrespect to them, which I was obliged to listen to, but shall not repeat). ' Then, sir, am I authorised to say that *you come express from the Lord Lieutenant to tell me that my publication, stating the falsehoods on which the Act is founded, will be considered as a breach of the treaty, and the executions will go on as formerly ?* ' ' You are, sir, if you publish at all ; that is my message.' I told him that I would take no further step until I consulted my fellow-prisoners. He then told me he hoped to get some of the offensive passages in the bill softened, if it had not yet passed the Lords, and left me with a promise of immediately waiting on the Chancellor for that purpose. The prisoners (whom I consulted as secretly as I had an opportunity of doing), feeling that it might occasion a renewal of all the miseries of the country, which were at that time suspended at least, did not authorise me to proceed any further, nor did I think myself warranted in publishing at such a risk. I heard no more of Mr. Cooke or the Chancellor, and the bill passed with all its deformity.

The object is plain : they meant to keep the prisoners as long as possible—use them as far as possible—and then turn them loose on the world with a "certificate of villany."

The compact had now, in fact, become a dead letter. On the 25th of September, Arthur O'Connor wrote to Lord Cornwallis, again demanding performance of the terms to which Castlereagh had pledged the good faith of the government. On the 21st of October, he received the Lord Lieutenant's answer, informing him and the other prisoners that they would be permitted to emigrate to America, on condition of giving security *not to return to Europe*—a permission, however, which was speedily nullified by an intimation from the American ambassador, Mr. Rufus King, that his government would enforce the alien act against such emigrants. As the utmost exertions of the British Cabinet were unavailing to overcome the scruples of the United States' minister, the captives had the whole world shut against them.

At the end of six weeks more, a new interpretation was put on the compact. On the 5th of December, the prisoners received from the Castle a message, in Lord Castlereagh's handwriting, stating that all the prisoners, *except* Neilson, Russell, Emmet, Macneven, O'Connor, and ten others, were at liberty to retire to any neutral country on the continent. The excepted fifteen "could not be liberated at present ;" his Excellency "would be glad to extend the indulgence to them as soon as he could do it consistent with the attention which he owed to the public safety."

At length, after three months more of waiting and suspense, the government came to a decision :—

"On the 18th of March," says Neilson, "in the evening, fourteen of us received notice to prepare *to go on board ship the next morning at six*

o'clock! No intimation of what further destination was intended—all we could tell our friends, if we had been given time to have seen them, was that we were to go on board ship in a few hours, but whether for Botany Bay, Siberia, or to be scuttled and sunk, was alike unknown to us. On this occasion our astonishment was beyond description: some of us really thought it might have been a piece of fun practised upon us by the gaoler—a kind of cruelty not unfrequent in these dreary abodes of safe custody. I was at this period confined to my bed by an intermittent fever, and having often experienced the most unexampled roughness from Gregg (the gaoler), I really imagined he was making an experiment upon my life. I was not able to write, but I immediately dictated the following letter to Lord Cornwallis:—

“ ‘ MY LORD—I have received a message this moment from Mr. Cooke, through our gaoler, stating that I am to be removed to a ship to-morrow morning at six o'clock. I am astonished at this notice, so entirely contradictory to the faith of government solemnly pledged; for though I wish to go abroad, yet I would desire to settle (as was agreed upon) the place of exile, and the accommodations on board. It must occur to your lordship that, at any rate, two or three days must be necessary to prepare for an eternal adieu to my native country, my wife and children. I thought the treatment I had received for the last seven years from government might have satiated any revenge, without this additional piece of severity, and this additional breach of a solemn engagement. In the meantime, I request your lordship will have the goodness to state whether this order is authorised or not.

“ ‘ I am, my lord, &c.,

“ ‘ SAMUEL NEILSON.

“ ‘ *New Prison, March 18th, 1799.*’

“ This letter was sent to the Castle late that night, and the prisoners were sent on board ship the next morning!”

The unknown place of their destination turned out to be FORT GEORGE, in Inverness-shire, where they arrived on the 14th of April, 1799. And there they remained through that year, and the next, and the next—treated, as appears from their frequent acknowledgments of the behaviour of the governor, Lieutenant-Colonel Stuart, with all the leniency and respect that could mitigate so abominable a breach of faith, but closely confined, completely secluded from all intercourse with the world but what passed under the eye of their military gaolers, and to all appearance utterly forgotten by the government of “utmost liberality and good faith.” Neilson writes—“As to us *deportés*, I see no disposition to recollect us; *we are put, like old debts, in the back of the book.*” Not till the last day of May, 1802, did the government take notice of their existence. On the 30th of the June following, they sailed for Hamburg.

The subsequent fortunes of this little band of exiles do not belong to our history. Most of those whom the preceding pages have made individually known to the reader eventually settled in America, and formed (in New York especially) a little community of “United Irishmen”—neither of the agitating nor conspiring sort. They kept up a kindly intercourse among themselves; the intermarriages of the children superadded domestic

affinity to the "brotherhood of affection and identity of interests" which had combined the fathers in political union; and by their virtues in private life, no less than by the consistency of their public principles, they vindicated their own and their country's good fame.*

CHAPTER XVI.

THE FRENCH COME AT LAST — KILLALA, CASTLEBAR, AND BALLINAMUCK — GENERAL TONE ON BOARD — LOUGH SWILLY — THE FIRST AND LAST OF THE UNITED IRISHMEN — CONCLUSION.

THE Rebellion has come and gone—yet we have heard nothing of General TONE and the *Armée d'Angleterre*. It seems to have been a fatality in the Irish Rebellion of 1798, that precisely where there was the most of industrious, calculating, and pains-taking preparation, action was most tardy and ineffectual. In the first week of the insurrection, just when foreign aid was most needed and would have been most useful, the flower of the *Armée d'Angleterre* was afloat in Toulon waters, under sailing orders for Egypt; and only a disorganised remnant was left. In the very heat and height of the war—when the presence, at the right place and time, of a few thousand, or a few hundred, well-equipped and well-officered soldiers of the Republic might have turned the trembling balance—the French Directory were voting the adjournment of the whole business to a more convenient season. On the 20th of June, the day before the decisive battle of Vinegar Hill, Tone went to visit General Kilmaine, the Commander-in-Chief of the remnant of the army of England. The general told him "he was much afraid the government would do nothing;" and read a letter he had that morning received from the Minister of Marine, stating that "in consequence of the great superiority of the naval force of the enemy, and difficulty of escaping from any of the ports during the fine season, the Directory were determined to adjourn the measure until a more favourable occasion." Poor Tone "lost his temper at this, and told him that if the affair was adjourned, it was lost: the present crisis must be seized, or it would be too late." Kilmaine answered, "he saw all that; but

* Dr. Madden (Second Series, vol. ii., p. 191 *et seq.*) gives a goodly catalogue of United Irishmen, and sons of United Irishmen, who have risen to stations of trust and honour in the American Republic. It may interest the reader to learn that Emmet had a long and successful career at the bar, and in 1812 received the appointment of Attorney-General of the state of New York. He died in 1827, and a monument is erected to his memory in Broadway. Macneven obtained high repute as a practising physician and professor in the medical schools of New York, where he resided till his death, in July, 1841. Neilson was less fortunate than his friends and compatriots. A six-years' imprisonment (the interval of a few weeks excepted) had completely broken his constitution; he died at Poughkeepsy, a small town on the river Hudson, in August, 1803. His letters to his family, from Fort George, give a very pleasing impression of his affectionateness, good sense, good principles, and cheerful religious wisdom. Arthur O'Connor is, we believe, still living, in France.

what could he do?"* He could, in truth, do nothing; and the Directory could do nothing: the best of their men and ships were gone to Egypt, the arsenals were empty, the treasury was empty. The twelfth hour had already struck, when, stimulated by each successive arrival of news from Ireland of battles, massacres, and military executions, the Directory at last determined to prepare for making a beginning. By the end of June the rebellion was over—in the beginning of July, Tone was called to Paris to consult with the ministers of the War and Navy departments on the organisation of a new expedition."†

The plan of this new expedition was to dispatch from several ports such small armaments as could be got ready on short notice, in the hope of feeding the expiring rebellion and distracting the attention of the enemy, until an opportunity should arise for landing the main body under General Kilmaine. General HUMBERT, with about a thousand men, was stationed for this purpose at Rochelle, and General HARDY, with three thousand, at Brest: the army of reserve, under Kilmaine, numbered nine thousand. The requisite preparations, however, in the exhausted state of the French finances, went on slowly and with difficulty. The rate at which the armament proceeded in the ports of France bore no proportion to that at which the Irish government was disarming and crushing the insurgents. Even the daily arrival of crowds of indignant refugees, who, "when they saw the slowness of the French preparations, exclaimed that they wanted nothing but arms; and that if the government would only land them again on the coast, the people themselves, without any aid, would suffice to reconquer their liberty," could not effectually hasten the languid movements of the pauperised Directory.

While matters were in this state, General Humbert—a daring, dashing, forlorn-hope kind of soldier, who had received his military education under Hoche in the war of La Vendée, and accompanied his master in the Bantry-Bay expedition of 1796—a man excellently fitted to carry through a bold *coup de main*, though not gifted with the skill and science requisite for an extended and prolonged plan of operations—impatient of the interminable delays of his government, and fired by the reports of the Irish refugees, determined to begin at once on his own responsibility, leaving the Directory to second or desert him as they thought proper. Towards the middle of August, he called together some of the magistrates and merchants of Rochelle—forced them to advance him a small sum of money and other necessities, on military requisition—and, with a thousand men (some accounts say eleven hundred), a thousand spare muskets, a few pieces of light artillery, and a few frigates and transports, hurried out to sea. He was accompanied by three Irishmen—Matthew Tone (a brother of Theobald Wolfe Tone), Bartholomew Teeling, and one Sullivan. On the 22nd of August, Humbert anchored in the Bay of KILLALA, on the northern coast of Connaught, and instantly landed a party of grenadiers with orders to storm the town. In two hours the French general was quietly established in head-quarters at the Episcopal Palace.‡

* "Memoirs of Theobald Wolfe Tone," vol. ii., p. 324.

† Ibid, p. 338.

‡ The Bishop of Killala at this time was Dr. Stock, an amiable and liberal-minded prelate. His "Narrative of what passed at Killala, in the county of Mayo, and the parts adjacent, during the French Invasion in the summer of 1798," is one of the most

It was a bold enterprise, this of conquering Ireland from the British Crown with only a thousand men—bold to the verge of madness; yet its beginnings were wonderfully propitious, and afford matter for curious spe-

curious and entertaining pieces of history which the events of the year produced. It is a pleasant, gossiping—it must also be confessed, a somewhat twaddling—account of the scenes and events of the invasion, as they presented themselves to the perceptions of a good-hearted, comfortable Protestant bishop.

The bishop bears the highest testimony, again and again (Barrington says, at the expense of his own prospects of translation), to the good conduct and moderation of the French general and troops. They seem to have behaved admirably, from first to last. It was some little time before our right reverend chronicler could quite divest himself of the apprehension that these uninvited occupants of his episcopal mansion were a sort of ogres or cannibals; but the evidences of civilised humanity were too unmistakable to be permanently resisted, and, long before the free-quarters of the invaders were at an end they made a very pleasant, though costly, family party. The Bishop feelingly laments that his visitors had “no religion;” but it was something in their favour, that they “most religiously observed” their promise to treat him and his with “respectful attention, and to take nothing for the troops but what was absolutely necessary for their support.” The republican Atheists seem to have had considerably more of the religion which consists in keeping promises than their orthodox enemies. The very first prisoner they took, a yeomanry captain of the name of Kirkwood, was allowed to go and visit his sick wife, and broke his parole. If they had no religion themselves, they respected the religion of others; they burned no chapels, and took care to keep the precincts of the castle quiet on Sunday mornings. The Bishop says that they maintained “excellent discipline constantly;” carried away “not a single particular of private property;” observed “scrupulous delicacy” towards the women of his household; and were always ready “to assist in little menial offices in and about the house wherever they were wanted.” His only very serious grievance was a most inordinate consumption of coals:—“of his kitchen grate so incessant use was made, from early morning even to midnight, that the chimney was on fire more than once, and in the middle of summer above thirty ton of coals lasted only one month.” It is satisfactory to learn that, in the midst of all the good man’s troubles, “his health and appetite seemed to be improved, nor did he ever in his life sleep better.” On the whole, we may pronounce the Bishop fortunate in having French enemies at free-quarters in his castle, rather than British Protestant friends.

Equally generous was the behaviour of the French troops towards the Protestant inhabitants of the town. Their position necessitated a system of military requisition, but they neither practised nor tolerated indiscriminate plunder. The great difficulty was with their Irish recruits, whose propensity to pillage and bloodshed they had much trouble in restraining: still, the restraint was exercised, and with effect. Charost, the officer whom Humbert left in Killala with a garrison of two hundred men, while he prosecuted his enterprise in the interior, distributed arms and ammunition freely to all who desired them for self-defence, “without distinction of religion or party,” and “under no other condition than a promise of restoring them when he should call for them.” To the end he continued to warn his recruits, that “if ever he caught them preparing to spoil and murder Protestants, he and his officers would side with the Protestants against them to the very last extremity.” With the aid of the inhabitants, Charost instituted a sort of local elective government, which was very efficient, for the protection of life and property. In fact, towards the close of this most moderate and merciful invasion, when the passions of the peasantry were inflamed by the expected arrival of the victorious royal troops, the position of the French officers in the castle and town was virtually that of an armed police and magistracy, entrusted with the protection of Protestant life and property. The Bishop says, “As long as the two hundred French soldiers were suffered to remain for the defence of Killala, the Protestant inhabitants felt themselves perfectly secure.” At length they “parted, not without tears, from their friends and protectors.” Things went not so well with the people of Killala when the king’s troops came back to protect them.

It is pleasant to be able to say that the exemplary conduct of this little band of invaders was appreciated by the British government. The three French officers who commanded the garrison were, on the Bishop’s report of their behaviour, liberated and sent home without exchange. The Directory, however, “could not avail themselves of so polite

culatation. These thousand French soldiers, of the very best France had—intelligent, temperate, patient of fatigue, daringly brave, perfectly equipped, inured to the most exact and rigid discipline, half of them fresh from service with Napoleon and the army of Italy—if they could only have been got over there six weeks before, or if, when there, they had been efficiently seconded by reinforcements from home, it seems not violently improbable that our History of the Irish Rebellion of 1798 might have had a different ending.

On the morning of the 23rd, Humbert marched with a party of his troops to Ballina, a small town a few miles southward. The garrison fled, after a feeble attempt at resistance. Humbert left a small party in possession of the place, and returned to Killala. These first successes told powerfully on the temper of the peasantry. They flocked in by hundreds to join the invaders and receive arms and uniforms; about a thousand were completely equipped and clothed. Thus reinforced, Humbert prepared to act on a larger scale. On the 26th, leaving two hundred men and some officers to defend Killala, he marched with the main body of his army (eight hundred Frenchmen, and above a thousand raw native recruits) to attack CASTLEBAR, the county town; whose garrison, at all times considerable, was now augmented to a force of six thousand men, well provided with artillery, under the command of General Lake. A fatiguing march of fifteen hours, through rough and difficult mountain passes, where their cannon (two light pieces) had to be dragged along by the hands of the peasantry, brought the invaders, early on the morning of the 27th, within view of the British troops, strongly posted between them and the town.

In the engagement of the 27th of August, the army "formidable to every one but the enemy" fully justified its well-established reputation. It was easy work whipping peasants and cutting down stragglers—but there was no standing the charge of those terrible grenadiers who had been at Lodi. In half an hour the whole of the British troops were routed. The retreat was conducted with more regard to self-preservation than to military discipline. It was "like that of a mob," says Barrington; heavy

an offer, because their officers at Killala had only done their duty, and no more than what any Frenchman would have done in the same situation."

The Bishop's description of Killala in the hands of French, like Hay's account of Wexford under the rebel government, is of great interest, as affording a kind of proximate indication of the results which would have followed the success of the United Irishmen's plans. So far as the experiment was allowed to proceed, there does not appear reason to believe that the condition of the Irish people, or the morality of their government, would have been materially deteriorated by a revolution. Notwithstanding all the disorders and alarms incident to popular commotion and foreign invasion, the towns of Killala and Wexford had no ground for rejoicing in the victory of the British troops and the restored ascendancy of the law and constitution.

One result of accepting French aid developed itself at Killala, which would probably, in the event of a successful invasion on a large scale, have occasioned serious mischief, and greatly embarrassed the popular leaders. The Irish peasantry and the French soldiers could not at all understand one another on the subject of religion. The Bishop informs us that "it astonished the French officers to hear the recruits, when they offered their services, declare that 'they were come to take arms for France and the Blessed Virgin.'" The Frenchmen said "they had just driven Mr. Pope out of Italy, and did not expect to find him again so suddenly in Ireland." Had a revolution been effected by the help of these very anti-Catholic allies, this antagonism would have placed formidable difficulties in the way of a cordial and permanent amity between the two nations.

cavalry, light cavalry, infantry, and Jocelyn Fox-Hunters, all jumbled together. They fled—those who had horses to carry them—“through thick and thin,” and never halted till they reached the town of Tuam, nearly forty English miles from the scene of action. They then ran on to Athlone, on the east of the Shannon, thirty miles further. This disgraceful business was called the “Races of Castlebar.”

The French, meanwhile, entered the town, took quiet possession, and prepared to enjoy themselves. They did not burn and massacre: they “immediately set about putting their persons in the best order, and the officers advertised a ball and supper that night for the ladies of the town. This, it is said, was well attended. Decorum in all points was strictly preserved; they paid ready money for everything, and hanged some rebels who attempted to plunder.”*

The victory of Castlebar placed in Humbert's hands a large supply of military stores, arms, ammunition, and baggage, the whole of General Lake's artillery, together with a vast number of prisoners, many of whom joined the invaders.† He pursued his successes; and in less than a week from the day of his landing, was undisputed master (in addition to his previous acquisitions) of the towns of Newport, Westport, Foxford, and Ballinrobe. The county of Mayo was completely revolutionised, and a civil and military organisation was in progress for the entire province of Connaught. These triumphs were, however, though startling and dazzling enough, fallacious and unsubstantial at bottom. Humbert had, in truth (as his Irish comrades strongly but ineffectually urged), no business at all in Connaught—the weakest, poorest, least excitable province of Ireland—but should have pushed at once into Ulster or Leinster, where the embers of the recent rebellion were still smouldering. But the French general was obstinate; and he only discovered his error when it was too late to retrieve it.

The government was now thoroughly alarmed. Another discomfiture like that of Castlebar, or a new arrival of troops from France, might raise half Ireland in a second rebellion worse than the first. Already there were rumours of large masses of insurgents getting ready in Longford and Westmeath, waiting only for an opportunity of joining the French in a march on Dublin. Panic soon gave place to vigour. On the 30th of August, Lord Cornwallis took the field in person with a powerful force, which was hourly augmented by accessions from the royal troops occupying stations near his line of march. All the disposable troops in the kingdom were put in motion, with orders to concentrate themselves on Humbert's position, and on no account to risk an engagement without an absolute certainty of success. The situation of the French became critical. Humbert left Castlebar on the 4th of September, to avoid being surrounded by the British armies advancing on that place from different points, and endeavoured to force his way across the Shannon, through Leitrim, into Longford or the mountains of Ulster. We need not detail the marchings and counter-marchings of the following days, which were spent in an almost unintermitted running fight between the little band of invaders and the

* Barrington's “Historic Memoirs,” vol. ii., p. 280.

† Barrington says—“A considerable part of the Louth and Kilkenny regiments, not finding it convenient to retreat, thought the next best thing they could do would be to join the victors, which they immediately did, and in one hour were completely equipped as French riflemen.”

cavalry of the pursuing armies. The French general displayed abundance of military talent: but the case was, in the nature of it, hopeless. On the 8th of September, he was surrounded at BALLINAMUCK, in Longford, by Lord Cornwallis and thirty thousand men. After half an hour's fighting for the honour of the Republic, Humbert took counsel of necessity, and surrendered. His force at this time consisted of eight hundred and forty Frenchmen (officers included), and about fifteen hundred rebels. The former were of course admitted to the usual terms of prisoners of war: the latter—equally “of course”—were butchered without mercy. Of the Irishmen who had originally accompanied the expedition, Sullivan passed unnoticed as a French officer; Matthew Tone and Bartholomew Teeling were brought in irons to Dublin, tried by court-martial as traitors, and executed. The Lord Lieutenant returned in triumph to the capital, leaving an army, under the command of General Trench, to reconquer the rebel towns, and execute the usual military atrocities on the inhabitants.*

The news of Humbert's departure threw the French Directory into the utmost perplexity. The business was none of theirs—yet they could not, either in honour or policy, desert their gallant and enterprising soldier. They immediately determined to hurry on their preparations with all possible rapidity, and dispatch General Hardy with reinforcements. The report of the successes at Killala and Castlebar, which quickly reached them, accelerated their movements. But such was the state, at this period, of the French navy and arsenals, that it was not till the 20th of September that a small armament—consisting of one ship of the line (the *Hoche*), and eight frigates, under Commodore Bompard, with three thousand soldiers under Hardy—could be got ready for sea. Of the surrender at Ballinamuck no tidings had yet reached France. The expedition was accompanied by Adjutant-General THEOBALD WOLFE TONE, in the Admiral's ship, and three other Irishmen.†

The voyage was long and tedious. To elude the British cruisers, Bompard took a large sweep to the westward, and then to the north-east, with the view of bearing down on the northern coast of Ireland, where a French landing would be least expected. He had to contend with adverse winds, which retarded his course, and scattered his flotilla. On the 10th of October, he arrived off the entrance of LOUGH SWILLY, in the extreme north of Ulster, with his nine sail reduced to four—the *Hoche*, the *Loire*, the *Resolue*, and the *Biche*.

At break of day on the 11th, while the French commodore was pressing forward to enter the Lough and land his troops, he perceived the squadron of Sir John Borlase Warren—six sail of the line, two frigates, and a sixty-gun razee—bearing down upon him. Passing the French frigates without

* Killala alone—the French garrison making it a point of honour not to desert their allies—offered a formidable resistance. It was taken, after a sanguinary conflict, on the 23rd of September. A fearful slaughter of the peasantry was the first fruit of victory; and after that came a week of “courts-martial in the morning, and the most crowded dinners at the castle in the evening.” As usual, the blaze of peasants' cabins was the signal of the approach of the king's troops.—See the Bishop's “Narrative.”

† Between twenty and thirty Irish refugees had previously embarked in a small fast-sailing vessel, with James Napper Tandy for their leader. On the 16th of September, they made the island of Raghlin, on the north-west coast of Ireland, but, hearing of Humbert's disaster, contented themselves with spreading some proclamations, and escaped to Norway.

business of firing a shot, the British commander singled out the Hoche. Escape was impossible, and Bompard did not attempt it. He instantly signalled his frigates to retreat through shallow water; and prepared, single-handed, to honour the flag of the Republic by a desperate defence. "At that moment," says Tone's Son, "a boat came from the Biche for his last orders. That ship had the best chance to get off. The French officers all supplicated my father to embark on board of her. 'Our contest is hopeless,' they observed; 'we shall be prisoners of war, but what will become of you?' 'Shall it be said,' replied he, 'that I fled, whilst the French were fighting the battles of my country?' He refused their offers, and determined to stand and fall with the ship. The Biche accomplished her escape."*

The Hoche was soon surrounded by four British ships of the line and one frigate: and now began "one of the most obstinate and desperate engagements which have ever been fought on the ocean. During six hours she sustained the fire of a whole fleet, till her masts and rigging were swept away; her scuppers flowed with blood, her wounded filled the cock-pit, her shattered ribs yawned at each new stroke, and let in five feet of water in the hold; her rudder was carried off, and she floated a dismantled wreck on the waters; her sails and cordage hung in shreds, nor could she reply with a single gun from her dismantled batteries to the unabating cannonade of the enemy. At length she struck. The Resolute and the Loire were soon reached by the English fleet. The former was in a sinking condition; she made, however, an honourable defence. The Loire sustained three attacks, drove off the English frigates, and had almost effected her escape; at length, engaged by the Anson razee of sixty guns, she struck, after an action of three hours, entirely dismasted."† Of Bompard's entire squadron, only three vessels eventually regained the French coast.

"During the action," continues Tone's biographer, "my father commanded one of the batteries, and, according to the report of the officers who returned to France, fought with the utmost desperation, and as if he was courting death. When the ship struck, confounded with the other officers, he was not recognised for some time; for he had completely acquired the language and appearance of a Frenchman. The two fleets were dispersed in every direction; nor was it till some days later that the Hoche was brought into Lough Swilly, and the prisoners landed and marched to Letterkenny. Yet rumours of his being on board must have been circulated, for the fact was public at Paris; but it was thought he had been killed in the action, and I am willing to believe that the British officers, respecting the valour of a fallen enemy, were not earnest in investigating the point. It was at length a gentleman well known in County Derry as a leader of the Orange party, and one of the chief magistrates in that neighbourhood, Sir George Hill, who had been his fellow-student in Trinity College, and knew his person, who undertook the task of discovering him. It is known that, in Spain, grandees and noblemen of the first rank pride themselves in the functions of familiars, spies, and informers of the Holy Inquisition; it remained for Ireland to offer a similar example. The French officers were invited to breakfast with the Earl of Cavan, who commanded in that district. My father sat undistinguished amongst them when Sir George Hill entered the room, followed by police officers

* "Memoirs of Theobald Wolfe Tone," vol. ii., p. 346.

† Ibid, p. 347.

Looking narrowly at the company, he singled out the object of his search, and stepping up to him, said, 'Mr. Tone, I am very happy to see you.' Instantly rising with the utmost composure, and disdaining all useless attempts at concealment, my father replied, 'Sir George, I am happy to see you; how are Lady Hill and your family?' Beckoned into the next room by the police officers, an unexpected indignity awaited him. It was filled with military; and one General Lavau, who commanded them, ordered him to be ironed, declaring that, as on leaving Ireland to enter the French service, he had not renounced his oath of allegiance, he remained a subject of Britain, and should be punished as a traitor. Seized with a momentary burst of indignation at such unworthy treatment and cowardly cruelty to a prisoner of war, he flung off his uniform, and cried, 'These fetters shall never degrade the revered insignia of the free nation which I have served.' Resuming then his usual calm, he offered his limbs to the irons; and when they were fixed, he exclaimed, 'For the cause which I have embraced, I feel prouder to wear these chains than if I were decorated with the star-and-garter of England.'" He was hurried off to Dublin, and thrown into the barrack prison.

The Irish government had now in its hands the most illustrious and formidable of all its enemies: the founder of the first Society of United Irishmen, the secretary to the Catholic Convention, the daring agitator, the wily conspirator, the successful negociator—the author of the Bantry-Bay expedition and the Texel armament—the very prince of traitors—the "Alpha and Omega of the Irish Union." Mercy for him was of course not to be thought of, even under the *régime* of Lord Cornwallis and Amnesty Acts. Nor was it desired: Tone's only wish was to die with honour like a soldier.

On Saturday, the 10th of November, the prisoner was brought up for trial in Dublin barracks, before General Loftus and a Court-Martial. He appeared, collected and self-possessed, in the uniform of a *chef de brigade*. The charge against him was read by the Judge-Advocate, implicating him as "a natural-born subject of our lord the king, having traitorously entered into the service of the French republic at open war with his Majesty, and being taken in the fact, bearing arms against his king and country," &c.; and he was called upon to plead, Guilty or Not Guilty.

Tone answered, "It was not his wish to avail himself of any subterfuge, or to give the Court any unnecessary trouble; he was ready to admit the whole of the charge exhibited against him, and consequently the appellation by which he was technically described." He only requested leave to read to the Court an address which he had prepared for the occasion, explanatory of the grounds and motives of his conduct.

The Court consented to hear him, provided he uttered nothing irrelevant to the cause or unfitting for them to listen to. The prisoner then rose, and read as follows:—

"Mr. President and Gentlemen of the Court—It is not my intention to give this Court any trouble respecting the purport of what has been alleged against me: my admission of the charge prevents a prolongation of those forms which could not be more irksome to you than they would be to me. What I have done has been purely from principle, and the fullest conviction of its rectitude. I wish not for mercy—I hope I am not an object of pity. I anticipate the consequence of my caption, and am pre-

pared for the event. The favourite object of my life has been the independence of my country, and to that object I have made every sacrifice.

“Placed in honourable poverty, the love of liberty was implanted by nature, and confirmed by education, in my heart. No seduction, no terror could banish it from thence; and seduction and terror have not been spared against me. To impart the inestimable blessings of liberty to the land of my birth, I have braved difficulties, bondage, and death.

“After an honourable combat, in which I strove to emulate the bravery of my gallant comrades, I was forced to submit, and was dragged in irons through the country, not so much to my disgrace as that of the person by whom such ungenerous and unmanly orders were issued.

“Whatever I have written and said on the fate of Ireland I here re-iterate.

“The connection of England I have ever considered as the bane of Ireland, and have done every thing in my power to break it, and to raise three millions of my countrymen to the rank of citizens.”*

The President here interrupted the prisoner with—“Mr. Tone, it is impossible we can listen to this.” And a member of the court remarked that the address seemed intended to make “injurious impressions” on the audience. Tone replied, that what followed would be found less exceptionable, and received permission to proceed. He continued—

“Having considered the resources of the country, and being convinced they were too weak to effect her independence without assistance, I sought that assistance in France: and without any intrigue, but asking in the open honesty of my principles, and that love of freedom which has ever distinguished me. I have been adopted by the French Republic; and, in the active discharge of my duty of a soldier, acquired—what is to me invaluable, and what I will never relinquish but with my existence—the friendship of some of the best characters in France, and the attachment and esteem of my brave companions in arms.

“It is not the sentence of any court that can weaken the force or alter the nature of those principles on which I have acted, and the truth of which will outlive those ephemeral prejudices that may rule for the day. To her I leave the vindication of my fame.

“It is now more than four years since persecution drove me from this country, and I need hardly say that, personally, I cannot be involved in any thing that has happened during my absence. In my efforts to accomplish the freedom of my country, I never have had recourse to any other than open and manly war. There have been atrocities committed on both sides, which I lament; and if the generous spirit which I had assisted to raise in the breasts of Irishmen has degenerated into a system of assassination, I believe all who had any knowledge of me from my infancy will be ready to admit that no man in existence could more heartily regret that the tyranny of any circumstances or policy should so pervert the natural dispositions of my countrymen.

“I have little more to say. *Success* is all in this life; and, unfavoured of her, virtue becomes vicious in the ephemeral estimation of those who attach every merit to prosperity. In the glorious race of patriotism, I have pursued the path chalked out by Washington in America, and Kos-

* See Howell's “State Trials,” vol. xxvii.

ciusko in Poland. Like the latter, I have failed to emancipate my country ; and, unlike both, I have forfeited my life. I have done my duty, and I have no doubt the Court will do theirs. I have only to add, that a man who has thought and acted as I have done, should be armed against the fear of death."

Here the prisoner was asked if there was anything else which he wished to address to the Court. He replied that, if he was not to be brought up again before the decision of the Court, he would wish to say a few words more ; which being allowed, he proceeded as follows :—

" I conceive that I stand here in the same light with our *émigrés* ; and, if the indulgence be in the power of the Court, I would only request what French magnanimity allowed to Charette and to the Count de Sombreuil—the death of a soldier, and to be shot by a file of grenadiers. This is the only favour I have to ask ; and I trust that men susceptible of the nice feelings of a soldier's honour will not refuse the request. It is not from any personal feeling that I make this request, but from a respect to the uniform which I wear, and to the brave army in which I have fought. From papers which I yesterday delivered into the hands of the brigade-major, it will be seen that I am as regularly breveted an officer in the French service as any here is in the British army, and it will be seen that I have not my commission as a protection."

The papers were produced and read. Tone again expressed his desire to be indulged with a military death ; and " as he had no doubt of the decision of the Court, he hoped that the confirmation of it by the Lord Lieutenant might be had as soon as possible, and execution of the sentence immediately follow—within an hour, if were practicable." The Court promised that the case should be considered and determined on without delay.

During that day and the next (Sunday), Tone evinced much anxiety to learn the Lord Lieutenant's decision as to the mode of his execution—the only matter which disturbed the habitual serenity of his mind. On the Sunday evening, he was informed that his conviction and sentence had been confirmed by Lord Cornwallis, but that his prayer for a soldier's death could not be complied with—he must suffer the same fate as " other traitors." The time fixed for his execution was the next morning—the place the front of the New Prison.

While the prisoner was silently nerving himself to the accomplishment of a purpose which he had long meditated, his friends were making one last effort to save him. The sentence under which he was condemned was clearly illegal. The courts of common law were then sitting, and courts-martial had consequently no jurisdiction over a man who had never taken a military oath to the British crown. Of his acquittal before any tribunal, there was, indeed, not the shadow of a hope. But it did not seem absolutely impossible, if execution could be stayed for the present, to effect some arrangement with the government, under which his life might be ultimately spared. Tone had few personal enemies, and many warm friends, even among those most opposed to him in politics. The French government, too, could not, in honour, but interfere on his behalf ; and the case might, from a merely legal, become a political one. Accordingly, it was

determined by Curran to bring the matter before the Court of King's Bench, then presided over by the merciful and upright Lord Kilwarden.

Immediately on the opening of the Court, on the morning of the fatal day (Monday, the 12th of November), Curran appeared at the bar, leading in the aged father of Tone, who made affidavit that his son had been brought before a bench of military officers calling themselves a court-martial, and by them illegally sentenced to death. "I do not pretend to say," observed the advocate, "that Mr. Tone is not guilty of the charges of which he is accused—I presume the officers were honourable men—but it is stated in the affidavit, as a solemn fact, that Mr. Tone had no commission under his Majesty, and therefore no court-martial could have cognisance of any crime imputed to him while the Court of King's Bench sat in the capacity of the great criminal court of the land. In times when war was raging, when man was opposed to man in the field, courts-martial might be endured; but every law authority is with me, while I stand upon this sacred and immutable principle of the constitution—that *martial law and civil law are incompatible*, and that the former must cease with the existence of the latter. This is not the time for arguing this momentous question. My client must appear in this court. He is cast for death this day. He may be ordered for execution while I address you. I call on the Court to support the law. I move for a *habeas corpus*, to be directed to the provost-marshal of the barracks of Dublin and Major Sandys, to bring up the body of Mr. Tone."

Lord Chief Justice: "Have a writ instantly prepared."

Mr. Curran: "My client may die while this writ is preparing."

Lord Chief Justice: "Mr. Sheriff, proceed to the barracks, and acquaint the provost-marshal that a writ is preparing to suspend Mr. Tone's execution; and see that he be not executed."

The Court awaited, in a state of the utmost agitation, the return of the sheriff. He shortly appeared, and said—"My lord, I have been at the barracks, in pursuance of your order. The provost-marshal says he must obey Major Sandys—Major Sandys says he must obey Lord Cornwallis."

At the same time Curran announced to the Court that, Mr. Tone, the father, was just returned, after serving the *habeas corpus*, and that General Craig would not obey it. The Chief Justice exclaimed—"Mr. Sheriff, take the body of Tone into your custody; take the provost-marshal and Major Sandys into custody, and show the order of this Court to General Craig."

The general impression now was that the prisoner would be led out to execution by the military authorities, in defiance of the Court.

At length, after an interval of intense anxiety and agitation, the sheriff returned. He had been refused admittance within the barracks, but was informed that "Mr. Tone, *having cut his throat the night before*, was not in a condition to be removed."

A French emigrant surgeon, whom General Craig had sent back with the sheriff, was then sworn. He said—"I was sent to attend Mr. Tone this morning at four o'clock. His windpipe was divided. I took instant measures to secure his life, by closing the wound. There is no knowing for four days whether it will be mortal. His head is now kept in one position. *A sentinel is over him to prevent his speaking*. His removal would kill him."

The Chief Justice said—"Let a rule be made for suspending the execution of Theobald Wolfe Tone, and let it be served on the proper persons."

The prisoner lingered for several days. "Stretched on his bloody pallet in a dungeon, the first apostle of Irish Union, and most illustrious martyr of Irish independence, counted each lingering hour during the last seven days and nights of his slow and silent agony. No one was allowed to approach him. Far from his adored family, and from all those friends whom he loved so dearly, the only forms which flitted before his eyes were those of the grim gaoler and rough attendants of the prison; the only sound which fell on his dying ear, the heavy tread of the sentry. He retained, however, the calmness of his soul and the possession of his faculties to the last; and the consciousness of dying for his country, and in the cause of justice and liberty, illumined like a bright halo his latest moments, and kept up his fortitude to the end." He died on the morning of the 19th of November.*

* The suspicion has been suggested that this alleged suicide was, in reality, a murder committed by the gaol authorities, irritated at the rumoured attempt to withdraw their victim from the jurisdiction of the military tribunal. And certainly the character of the men, the seclusion in which the prisoner was kept (no medical attendant even was allowed to see him, except the emigrant French surgeon), the omission of *post-mortem* inquiry by coroner's inquest, the resistance to the Lord Chief Justice's warrant, and the evident desire to conceal what had happened—these, taken together, would justify almost any suspicion. Still, the motive assigned for the crime seems inadequate; and Major Sandys and his satellites would hardly have performed a murder so clumsily as to allow their victim to survive during a whole week. The concealment of the fact on the sheriff's first visit, and the resistance to the authority of the Chief Justice, may be more probably explained, on the supposition that they were determined to insult the dying man by dragging him out to execution, dying as he was, and subjecting him to the ignominy from which he had hoped to escape.

The following passage, from the "Memoirs" of Tone, shows that his last act was the fulfilment of a long-cherished purpose, and at the same time affords a curious explanation of an error which had prevailed before the publication of that work:—

"In Cúrran's Life, by his Son, I find an anecdote mentioned which must have been derived from the authority of this gentleman" (he is speaking of one of the Irishmen who accompanied Hardy's expedition). "It is stated that, on the night previous to the sailing of the expedition, a question arose amongst the United Irishmen engaged in it, whether, in case of their falling into the enemy's hands, they should suffer themselves to be put to death according to the sentence of the law, or anticipate their fate by their own hands? That Mr. Tone maintained, with his usual eloquence and animation, that in no point of view in which he had ever considered suicide, could he hold it to be justifiable: that one of the company suggested that, from political considerations, it would be better not to relieve by any act of self-murder the Irish government from the discredit in which numerous executions would involve it; an idea which Mr. Tone highly approved. This anecdote is substantially correct; but the gentleman did not understand my father.

"At the period of this expedition he was hopeless of its success, and in the deepest dependency at the prospect of Irish affairs. Such was the wretched indiscretion of the government, that before his departure he read himself in the *Bien Informé* (a Paris newspaper) a detailed account of the whole armament, where his own name was mentioned in full letters, with the circumstance of his being embarked on board the *Hoché*. There was, therefore, no hope of secrecy. He had all along deprecated the idea of these attempts on a small scale; but he had also declared repeatedly, that if the government sent only a corporal's guard, he felt it his duty to go along with them. He saw no chance of Kilmaine's large expedition being ready in any space of time, and therefore determined to accompany Hardy. His resolution was, however, deliberately and inflexibly taken, in case he fell into the hands of the enemy, never to suffer the indignity of a public execution. He did not consider this as suicide—an act which in usual cases he re-

THIS was the Irish Rebellion of 1798 : the barbarous and bloody consummation—may history never have to chronicle another such!—of ages of oppression and misrule. We abstain from any attempt to count the cost of it. The cost cannot be counted, by any rule of moral or political arithmetic yet known : nay, it is even yet unliquidated. We have not by any means seen the end of the Irish Rebellion, with all our Indemnity and Amnesty Acts. It, and the causes which produced it, yet live, in the shape of that “chief difficulty” which remains to this hour the problem and perplexity of statesmanship—obstinately insolvable by aught but justice.

We talk, in smooth, easy phrase, of the “suppression” of the Rebellion of 1798. The Rebellion of 1798 is not suppressed. There are only two ways of suppressing such a rebellion as that—justice, and extermination. The one has hitherto been found a moral, the other will stand to the end of time a physical impossibility. The generation of 1798 has passed away, and another come : but the insurrectionary Union of Irishmen is yet present ; for the thing Irishmen united for—an “equal, full, and adequate representation of all the people of Ireland,” with the good government to which representation is a means—is yet future. It may “please the English people in general to forget all the facts in Irish history,” but the historic facts have moral and political consequences which it will be well for the English people in general to recollect. The true Indemnity and Amnesty Acts for Irish rebellion are yet to come.

garded as a weakness, or frenzy,—but merely as choosing the mode of his death ;—and, indeed, his constitutional and nervous sensitiveness at the slightest idea of personal indignity would have sufficed to determine him never to bear the touch of an executioner. It was at dinner, in our own house and in my mother’s presence, a little before leaving Paris, that the gentleman above-mentioned proposed that the Irish should leave to the government all the shame and odium of their execution. The idea struck him as ludicrous, and he applauded it highly : ‘My dear friend,’ he said, ‘say nothing more ; you never spoke better in your life.’ And after the gentleman’s departure, he laughed very heartily at his idea of shaming the Irish government by allowing himself to be hanged ; adding, that he did not at all understand people mooted the point whether they should or should not choose their own deaths, or consulting on such an occasion. That he would never advise others ; but, ‘please God, they should never have his poor bones to pick.’ ”



APPENDIX.

No. I.

THE ORANGE YEOMANRY.

Of the atrocities habitually perpetrated by the Yeomanry Corps in 1798—with full previous license and subsequent impunity—the following may serve as a specimen:—

THE TRIAL OF HUGH WOLLAGHAN, FOR THE MURDER OF THOMAS DOGHERTY.

Proceedings of a General Court-Martial held in the Barracks of Dublin, on Saturday, October 13th, 1798, by order of Lieut.-Gen. CRAIG.

Colonel Earl of ENNISKILLEN, President.

Major BROWN, R.I.D.

Captain ONGE, R.I.D.

Captain LESLIE, Fermanagh.

Captain IRWIN, R.I.D.

Captain CARTER, R.I.D.

Lieutenant SUMMERS, 68th.

JOSEPH ATKINSON, Esq., D.J. Advocate.

The Court being met and duly sworn, proceeded to the trial of Hugh Wollaghan, of Middleton, in the county of Wicklow, yeoman, charged with having on the first of October instant* come to the house of Thomas Dogherty, and did then and there shoot and kill the said Thomas Dogherty, to which he was encouraged by Charles Fox and James Fox, of the aforesaid county, yeomen; and the said James Fox is likewise charged with having discharged a loaded gun at Margaret Barry, of Delgany, on the first of October instant. The prisoner being duly arraigned, pleaded Not Guilty.

MARY DOGHERTY, of Delgany, in the county of Wicklow, sworn.

Q.: Do you know the prisoner at the bar?—A.: I do. The witness deposed that on Monday week the prisoner, Hugh Wollaghan, came into her house at Delgany, and demanded if there were any bloody rebels there; that on deponent's answering there was not, only a sick boy, the prisoner Wollaghan asked the boy if he was Dogherty's eldest son, upon which the boy stood up and told him he was. Wollaghan then said, "Well, you dog, if you are, you die here;" that the boy replied, "I hope not; if you have anything against me, bring me to Mr. Latouche, and give me a fair trial, and if you get anything against me, give me the severity of the law;" that Wollaghan replied, "No, you dog, I don't care for Latouche, you are to die here;" upon which the deponent said to Wollaghan (he then having the gun cocked in his hand), "For the love of God, spare my child's life, and take mine;" that Wollaghan replied, "No, you bloody w—; if I had your husband here, I would give him the same death." He then snapped the gun, but it did not go off; he snapped it a second time, but it did not go off; upon which a man of the name of Charles Fox, but not either of the prisoners at the bar, came in and said, "Damn your gun, there's no good in it;" and that the said Fox at the same time said to Wollaghan that that man (pointing to deponent's son) must be shot; that deponent then got hold of Wollaghan's gun and endeavoured to turn it from her son, upon which the gun went off, grazed her son's body, and shot him in the arm; the boy staggered—leaned on a form—turned up his eyes, and said, "Mother, pray for me." That on Wollaghan's firing the gun, he went out at the door, and in

* A period subsequent to the cessation of hostilities.

a short time returned in again, and said, "Is not the dog dead yet?" The deponent replied, "Oh! yes, sir; he is dead enough." Upon which Wollaghan replied (firing the gun at him again), "For fear he is not, let him take this." Deponent was at that instant holding up her son's head, when he fell, and died.

Q.: Who was in the house at this time?—A.: Esther Dogherty, sister to the deceased, was in the house when the first shot was fired, and then went away; another sister, Mary Dogherty, was in the house when Wollaghan first came in, but left it before the gun was fired by him. The prisoner, James Fox the elder, was outside the door with a gun, but took no act or part, as far as I could see, in the business; the prisoner James Fox I have nothing to allege against.

CROSS-EXAMINED.—Prisoner (to witness): Were not your husband and other son concerned in the rebellion?—A.: I can't tell.

Q.: Don't you believe your son was killed at Dunboyne, fighting the king's forces?—A.: He was not; he is now alive and working at his trade.

Q.: Don't you believe your deceased son was a rebel, and engaged in the battle of Dunboyne against the king's forces?—A.: I do not; he has been accused of it.

Q.: Did you ever hear that deceased was taken prisoner as a rebel?—A.: He was taken as a rebel, as I suppose, and was afterward put on board a ship lying in the river, where he was sick, and was got off by Lord Cornwallis's orders, through Mrs. Latouche, and put into the navy hospital.

Q.: Do you recollect seeing this paper before (showing the witness a manuscript song)?—A.: I never did, to the best of my knowledge.

Q.: Where is your husband, and how long has he been from home?—A.: He is now in Dublin, working at his trade of brogue making; but he was reaping at home at Delgany a month before this.

Q.: When did you last see your son whom you now say is living?—A.: Three months ago, at Newtown-park, working at his trade of brogue making.

Q.: Did you ever hear of any quarrel or dispute between your son and the prisoner Wollaghan?—A.: I never did.

ESTHER DOGHERTY, sister to the deceased, being examined as to the same points as her mother, gave similar evidence.

MARGARET BARRY being called upon and duly sworn, informed the court that she had nothing to say against James Fox, or any of the prisoners at the bar.

The prosecution being closed, and the prisoner, Hugh Wollaghan, being called to his defence, called on RICHARD BYRNE, a private in the Wallace Fencibles, who was duly sworn.

Prisoner (to Byrne): Did you know the deceased, Thomas Dogherty, his father, and brother?—A.: I did.

Q.: Have you any and what reason to think they were rebels, and did you see any of them exercise as such?—A.: Yes, I have seen them exercise with poles or pikes at Mr. Johnson's fields at Killencarrig, four miles beyond Bray, in the beginning of last spring.

Q.: Did any, and which of them, apply to you to join them as rebels?—A.: Thomas Dogherty, the man that is dead, asked me why I was not in among the body? "What body?" said I; upon which he said, "I'll leave you as you are."

Q.: Where did you find this paper?—A.: This paper came out of the pocket of Dogherty's mother in the churchyard at Delgany, the day on which the coroner's inquest sat on the body of her deceased son. I picked it up, conceiving it to be a bank-note; but finding there was no stamp on it, I showed it to a friend, as I can't read myself, and he told me it was a damned good thing; and the first time I saw Captain Gore who commands the Newtown Mount-Kennedy Yeomanry, I gave it to him.

Q.: When did you give it to him?—A.: That day.

Q.: Where do you live?—A.: This month past at the rendezvous in Kevin-street where I have been since I enlisted, except the time I went to Delgany.

Q.: Where did you live before?—A.: At Killencurragh, as a servant to a widow; and I was there near ten months.

Q.: How far is Killencarrig from Delgany?—A.: About half a mile.

CAPTAIN GORE was called and sworn, who deposed that he got the paper alluded to from the witness Byrne.

EDWARD WEYMAN, a private of the Newtown Mount-Kennedy Yeomanry, was sworn.

Prisoner (to Weyman): Did you know the Doghertys, and were any, and which of them, reputed rebels?—A.: I did, and the three were reputed as such.

Q.: Did the mother of deceased give you any furniture to keep, and what expressions did she make use of on that occasion?—A.: She did; she sent her daughter to me just after the Ancient Britons had been at Delgany, and requested that she might leave some leather and other articles in a sack at my house, which I consented to, and she sent them accordingly, and I kept them a month after the action at Mount-Kennedy. She offered them to me for sale; and when I pointed out the mischief that arose from the rebellion, she, with her hands lifted up, cursed the authors of it, and said that it brought ruin on herself and family, and that she had not seen her husband and sons for some time back. This conversation took place about the beginning of June.

The prisoner requested the indulgence of the court-martial until Monday to proceed with his defence, and the Court accordingly adjourned.

MONDAY, October 15th.

The court met pursuant to adjournment.

THOMAS VICARS, Esq., sworn.—Prisoner: Do you know, and by what means Thomas Dogherty was liberated and returned to the county of Wicklow, and for what was he confined?—A.: I understood that he had been taken in arms against the king's forces in the county of Westmeath, was tried by a court-martial of the Carlow Militia, and was sent to one of the guard-ships in the river Liffy to be transported; but, by the intervention of Mrs. Latouche to Mrs. Cooke and General Cradock, was liberated.

Q.: Do you know if Dogherty had any protection, and from whom?—A.: I don't know that he had, nor did I ever hear of his having one.

Q.: Do you know if he took the oath of allegiance after he was liberated?—A.: I don't know that he ever did.

Court: Do you know if he had been guilty of any act of rebellion since his release?—A.: I don't know of any.

ISAAC SUTTON, of Rathdrum, county of Wicklow, sworn.

Prisoner: Did you know the late Thomas Dogherty?—A.: I did. I was taken prisoner by the rebels near Roundwood, in the county of Wicklow, about the month of May last, and he was one of the guard over me; for I heard his name called Thomas Dogherty, and he answered to the name, and that he was a brogue-maker at Delgany.

Q.: Did you know Dogherty before you were taken prisoner, or did you see him since you got away from the rebels?—A.: No.

Q.: How do you know that it is the same Thomas Dogherty that was shot?—A.: It struck me that it was the same when I heard of his death, but I don't know that it is the same.

GEORGE KENNEDY, corporal of the Mount-Kennedy Yeomen, sworn.

Prisoner: Do you know Captain Armstrong; in what district did he command; and do you know of any general orders, and when were they given?—A.: I do know Captain Armstrong, of the King's County Militia, who commanded at Mount-Kennedy before and after Dogherty was shot. In consequence of the enormities and murders committed in that neighbourhood by day and night, the general orders given by him were, that any body of yeomanry going out, he would wish them not less than nine or ten for their own safety; and if they should meet with any *rebels* whom they knew, or *suspected to be such*, that they need not be at the trouble of bringing them in, but to *shoot them on the spot*. This order was before Dogherty was killed. The witness communicated this to the corps, and is very certain in the hearing of the prisoner Wollaghan.

Q.: Do you know of any party of your corps being ordered out on the 1st of October

last for the purpose you mention, and by whose orders did they go out on that day?—A : I don't recollect anything about it, as I was confined to my bed on that day.

Q. : Do you know me ; what is my general character as to sobriety and regularity in the corps?—A. : I have known you upwards of nine months in the corps, and I have known you during that time to be a sober, faithful, and *loyal* yeoman, and not degrading the rest of the corps ; one of the best in it.

Q. : Was it not the practice of the corps to go out on scouring parties, without orders, to protect their own property and that of their neighbours?—A. : I always looked upon it as an order and practice of the corps, particularly after what Captain Armstrong had mentioned.

Q. : Would you yourself, from his character and the orders you received, have thought yourself justified to shoot him?—A. : Yes ; I certainly would.

Q. : In any parties you have been with the prisoner, did you ever see him commit any act of cruelty, or show any inclination to it?—A. : No ; I never saw him do anything but what was his duty.

JOHN FOX, of Newtown Mount-Kennedy Corps, sworn.

(N.B.—This evidence corroborated that of Kelly's, the questions being the same.)

Serjeant NATHANIEL HAYES, of the Newtown Mount-Kennedy Yeomen, sworn.

Deposed that he knew the prisoner for four months in the corps, and that he always behaved as a sober, *loyal*, brave man, and good subject.

Prisoner : Do you know of any general orders issued to the corps, and by whom? —A. : I do ; Captain Armstrong, of the King's County Militia, said, in my hearing, that he would shoot or hang any rebels whom he suspected, and told the people under his command to do the same. This order was issued before Thomas Dogherty's death, and I should consider myself authorised to do so under that order.

Lieutenant WILLIAM TOMLINSON, of the Rathfram Yeomen Cavalry, sworn.

Prisoner : What were the orders issued to your corps, and those in your vicinity, respecting the rebels?—A. : It was generally understood that orders were given to the corps not to bring in prisoners, but to shoot any that were known to be rebels.

Q. : Do you recollect when these orders were understood to have come out, and by whom they were issued?—A. : I do not know who they came from, but they came out after the attack at Arklow.

Lieutenant GEORGE ANDERIV, of the Newtown Mount-Kennedy Yeomen, sworn.

And deposed that he has known the prisoner particularly upwards of ten years ; that that he is a good, *loyal* subject, and ready at all hours to do his duty ; and that he never knew him cruel ; on the contrary, never saw him act inhumanly. That since the death of Dogherty he attended parade until apprehended for this charge.

Captain ARCHER, of the same corps, sworn.

Deposed he knew the prisoner since he was a child, and that he worked for him in his profession, a mason, and always found him a sober and diligent man, and, since his being a yeoman, ready to obey his officers, and looked on him to be an acquisition to his corps.

Lieutenant RICHARD GORE, same corps, sworn.

Who deposed that he has known the prisoner since the attack at Newtown ; he was always obedient to his officers, and rather leaned to the side of mercy than not ; part of the corps marched against the rebels, and the prisoner, particularly, showed his promptitude, zeal, and courage on that occasion.

Captain GORB, sworn.

Deposed that he has known the prisoner about four months, and that he was one of attendants on his duty as a yeoman, and that he knew him to be a *loyal* and brave soldier, and never knew him to be guilty of any act of inhumanity; and that it was the practice of the corps to scour the country without an officer; and verily believes they understood it was their duty to shoot any rebels they met with, or suspected to be such; and deponent has heard that other corps had similar directions in other districts.

Defence closed, and the prisoner's counsel read an address to the Court for the prisoner.

The prisoner was acquitted.

“ *Dublin Castle, 18th October, 1798.*”

“ **SIR,**

“ Having laid before the Lord Lieutenant the proceedings of a general court-martial, held by your orders in Dublin barracks, on Saturday, the 18th instant, of which Colonel the Earl of Enniskillen is president, I am directed to acquaint you that his Excellency entirely disapproves of the sentence of the above court-martial acquitting Hugh Wollaghan of a cruel and deliberate murder, of which, by the clearest evidence, he appears to have been guilty.

“ Lord Cornwallis orders the court-martial to be immediately dissolved, and directs that Hugh Wollaghan shall be dismissed from the corps of yeomanry in which he served; and that he shall not be received into any other corps of yeomanry in this kingdom. His Excellency further desires that the above may be read to the president and members of the court-martial in open court.

“ I have the honour to be,

“ Sir,

“ Your most obedient humble servant,

“ H. TAYLOR, Sec.

“ To Lieutenant-General Craig, &c.

“ P. S.—I am also directed to desire that a new court-martial may be immediately convened for the trial of such prisoners as may be brought before them—and that none of the officers who sat upon Hugh Wollaghan be admitted as members.”

No. II.

SOME STATISTICS OF THE REBELLION.

The Report of the Secret Committee of 1798 gives the following “Return of Arms seized and surrendered in the several districts:”—

48,109 guns,
1,756 bayonets,
4,463 pistols,
4,183 swords,
22 pieces of ordnance,
70,630 pikes.

When Dr. Macneven was asked, by a member of the Committee, to what number he thought the United Irishmen amounted all over the kingdom, he replied—“Those who have taken the test do not, I am convinced, fall short of 500,000, without reckoning

women and old men: the number regularly organised is not less than 300,000; and I have no doubt all these will be ready to fight for the liberties of Ireland when they get a fair opportunity."

"The effective strength of the army in Ireland, exclusive of yeomanry, according to an official return quoted by the author of the 'Strictures on Plowden's History,' on the 1st of August, 1798, was 52,347; cavalry, 7,041, infantry, 45,206. The yeomanry force, by the Commons' Secret Report of 1798, exceeded 50,000. So that the total force exceeded 100,000. The loss on the part of the king's troops, regulars, militia, and yeomanry, is estimated by Plowden, Barrington, Curran, and Moore at 20,000; and the loss on the side of the people at 50,000. Total loss, 70,000."—MADDEN, Second Series, vol. ii., p. 531.

Dr. M. says elsewhere (vol. i., p. 376-7).—As to the expenses the government had to encounter and defray on account of this rebellion, the following calculation may give some idea of the amount:—

From 1797 to 1802 the cost of the large military force that was kept up in Ireland, estimated at £4,000,000 per annum	£16,000,000
Purchase of the Irish Parliament	1,500,000
Payment of claims of suffering loyalists	1,500,000
Secret Service Money, from 1797 to 1804	53,547
Probable amount of pensions paid for services in suppression of the rebellion and the carrying of the Union, from 1797 to 1842 . . .	1,000,000
Increased expense of legal proceedings and judicial tribunals . . .	500,000
Additional expenditure in public offices consequent on increased duties in 1798, and alterations in establishments attendant on the Union, the removal of parliamentary archives, and compensation of officers, servants, &c.	500,000
	<hr/>
	£21,053,547

This writer's comment on the above estimate is worth adding, for the consideration of all persons who would rather not see ten per cent. added to the Income Tax:—

"So that the cost of suppressing the Rebellion in Ireland, in 1798, it would appear, cost more than five times the amount which was expended in the suppression of the recent Canadian one; which, on the authority of Sir Robert Peel, cost three millions and a half.* To go to war with Ireland forty-five years ago, with half the amount of its present population, cost Great Britain about nineteen millions, and both countries a loss of 70,000 lives."—Second Series, vol. ii., p. 532.

* Debate on the Canadian Corn Importation Question, the 23rd of May, 1843:—Sir Robert Peel said, "They found that a rebellion had recently existed in the colony; that the cost of suppressing that rebellion had been, by direct votes of that house, little short of two millions of money; that when they came to add the additional cost of maintaining the army in the colony, and of transporting forces thither, the total expense was in reality little less than 3,500,000. There was a force in Canada of no less than twenty-two battalions of British infantry."

No. III.

RELIGION PROFESSED BY THE LEADING MEMBERS OF THE UNITED
IRISH SOCIETY, OR PERSONS SUSPECTED OF SO BEING,(The following names in brackets are those of the state prisoners who had been confined
in Fort George.)

PROTESTANTS.	PRESBYTERIANS.	CATHOLICS.
Thomas A. Emmett, Bar.,	William Tennant, M.D.,	W. J. Macneven, M.D.,
Arthur O'Connor, "	Robert Simms,	John Sweeny,
Roger O'Connor, "	Samuel Neilson,	Joseph Cormick,
Thomas Russell,	George Cumming,	John Sweetman,
John Chambers,	Joseph Cuthbert,	
Matthew Dowling,	Rev. W. Steele Dickson,	
Edward Hudson,		
Hugh Wilson,		
William Dowdall,		
Robert Hunter,		
Hon. Simon Butler, Bar.,	William Drennan, M.D.,	Peter Finnerty,
A. H. Rowan,	* William Orr,	* William Michael Byrne,
James Napper Tandy,	* Samuel Orr,	* John M'Cann,
Lord Edward Fitzgerald,	William Putnam M'Cabe,	* J. Esmond, M.D.,
* Henry Sheares, Bar.,	* Henry Monroe,	William Lawless,
* John Sheares, "	* James Dickey, Attor.,	Edward John Lewins,
Oliver Bond,	Henry Haslett,	* William Byrne,
* B. B. Harvey,	William Sampson, Bar.,	* Walter Devereux,
Leonard M'Nally, Bar.,	* Henry Joy M'Cracken,	John Devereux (the Gen.
John Russell,	William Sinclair,	Devereux),
* Anthony Perry,	J. Sinclair,	Garret Byrne,
T. W. Tone, Bar.	Robert M'Gee, M.D.,	* Edmond Kyan,
* Bartholomew Tone,	Israel Milliken,	Charles Teeling,
Thomas Wright,	Gilbert M'Ilvain, jun.,	* Bartholomew Teeling,
Wm. Livingston Webb,	Robert Byers,	Richard M'Cormick,
William Hamilton,	* Henry Byers,	Thomas Doorley,
Matthew Dowling, Attor.,	S. Kennedy,	* Felix Rourke,
Richard Kirwan,†	Robert Hunter,	Bernard Mahon,
James Reynolds, M.D.,	Robert Orr,	John Sweetman,
Deane Swift, Bar.	Hugh Grimes,	E. Fitzgerald (Wexford),
* Matthew Keugh,	William Kean,	William Aylmer,
Thomas Corbett,	James Burnside,	* S. Barrett,
William Corbett,	James Greer,	Ferdinand O'Donnell,
William Weir,	Rowley Osborne,	* Col. O'Doude,
John Allen,	Mr. Turner,	* John Kelly,
Thomas Bacon,	William Simms,	Thomas Cloney,
Robert Emmett,	John Rabb,	* John Clinch,
Joseph Holt.	James Hope.	James Farrell,
		Michael Dwyer.

* Those marked (*) were executed.

† The eminent chemist and mineralogist, Richard Kirwan, on the authority of Dr. Macneven, was sworn by him, Dr. M.

The Clergy who were implicated, or accused of being concerned, in the Rebellion, were the following :—

PRESBYTERIANS.

* Rev. Mr. Warwick,
 Rev. W. Steele Dickson,
 * Rev. William Porter,
 Rev. Mr. Barber,
 Rev. Mr. Mahon,
 Rev. Mr. Birch,
 Rev. Mr. Ward,
 Rev. Mr. Smith,
 Rev. Mr. Sinclair,
 * Rev. Mr. Stevelly,
 Rev. Mr. McNeill,
 Rev. Mr. Simpson,

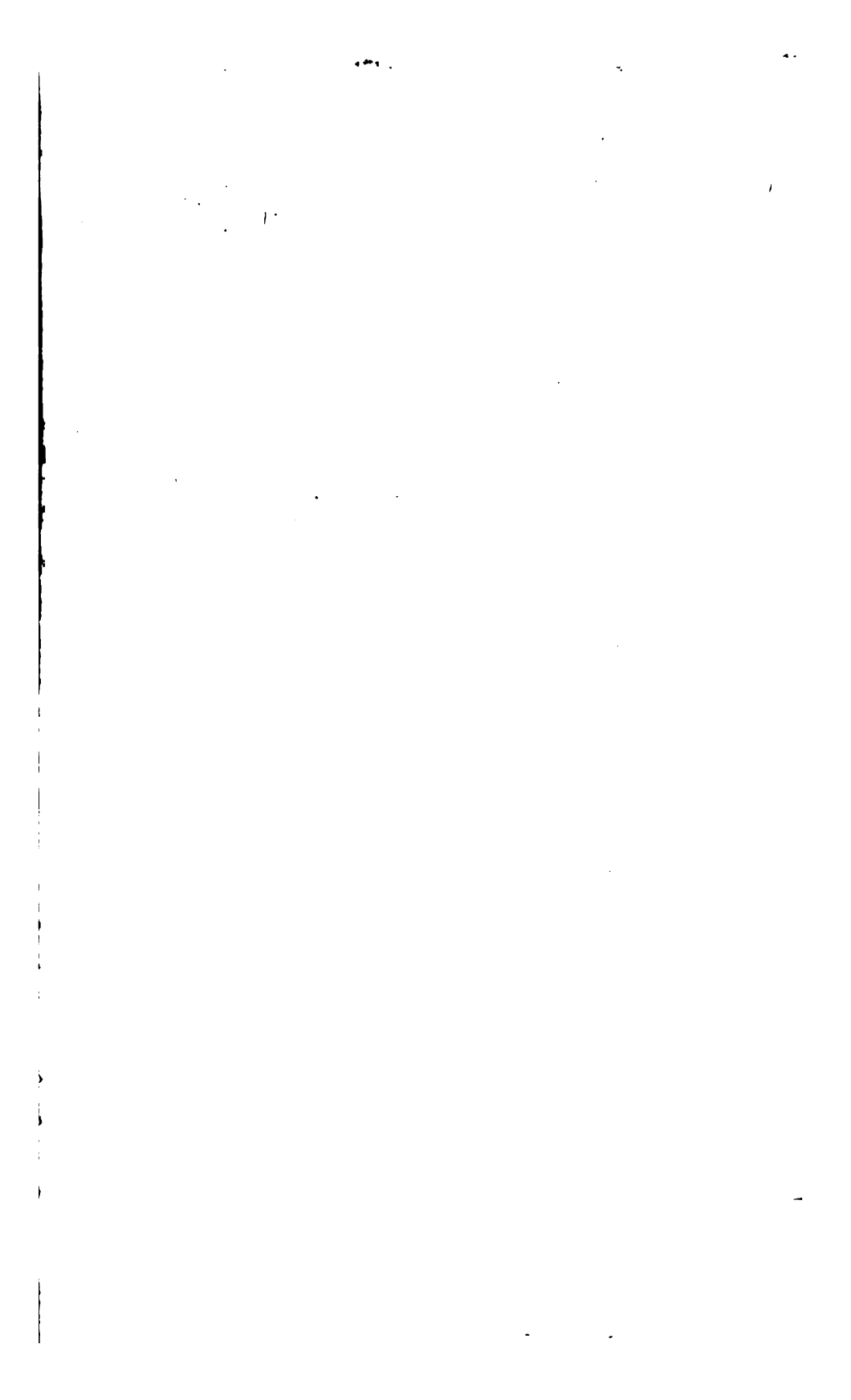
CATHOLICS.

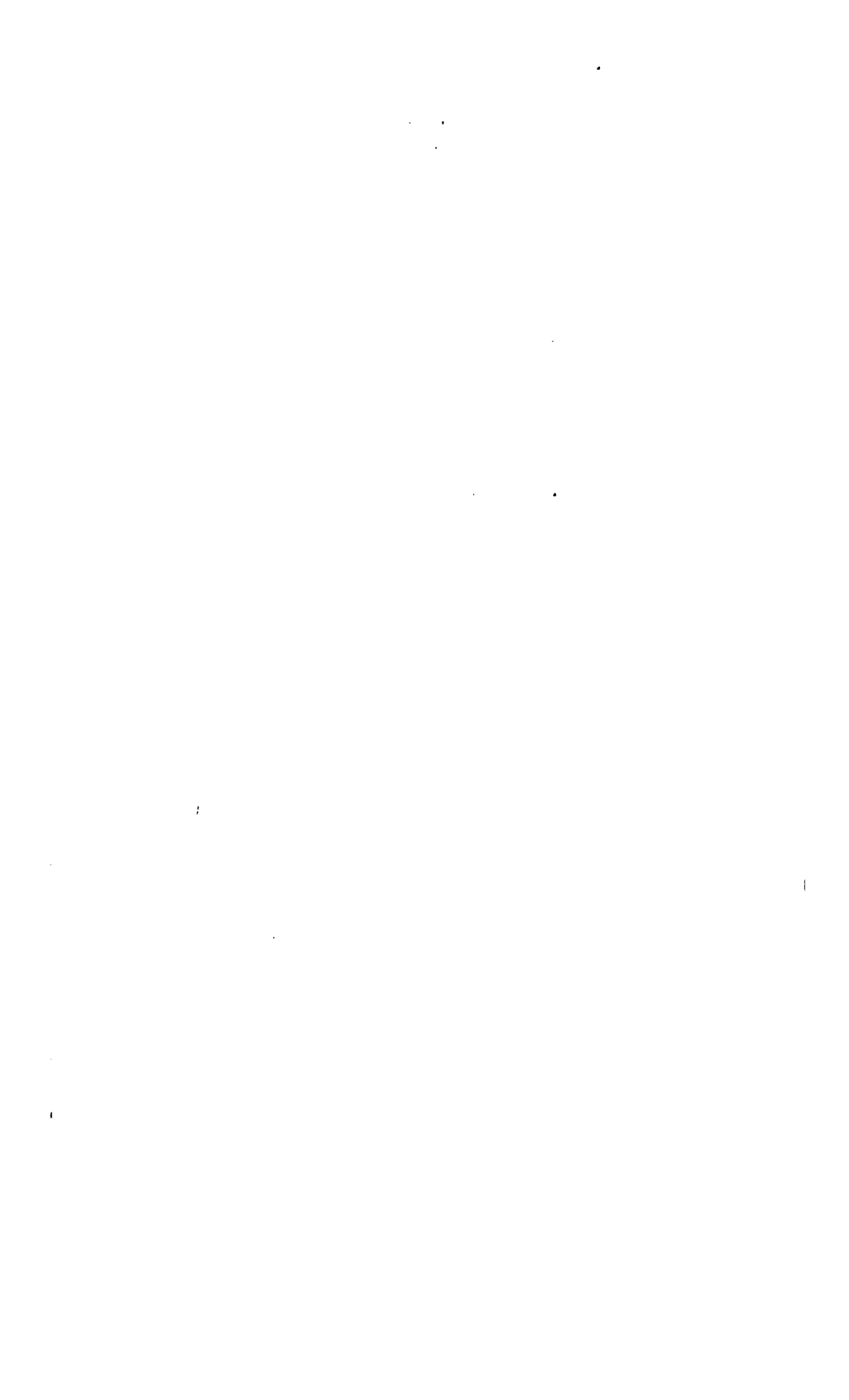
* Rev. Moses Kearna,
 * Rev. John Murphy,
 Rev. Michael Murphy,
 Rev. Mr. Kavanagh,
 * Rev. Mr. Redmond,
 Rev. Mr. Stafford,
 * Rev. P. Roche,
 Rev. H. O'Keon,
 * Rev. Mr. Prendergast,
 Rev. Mr. Harrold,
 * Rev. J. Quigley,
 Rev. Dennis Taale.

The preceding list of the names of the leaders of the United Irishmen include those of the actors in the rebellion, as well as those of the originators and organisers of it; but if we separate the one from the other, and enumerate the organising leaders, we shall find that the Protestant and Presbyterian members, compared with the Roman Catholic members, are in proportion of about four to one. There never was a greater mistake than to call this struggle a Popish rebellion: the movement was pre-eminently a Protestant one.—MADDEN, vol. ii., p. 342.

* Those marked (*) were executed.

THE END.









NOV 28 1930

